Maceda bid to import 4 luxury cars exposed

Story Below, Col. 2

First-time voters can still register

By Juliet L. Javellana
and Cathy C. Yamsuan

FIRST-TIME voters who failed to register for the May elections last month will get a chance to do so after the Commission on Elections agreed to hold special registration days on Feb. 17 and 18.

This was announced yesterday by Sen. Raul

FIRST/ A13

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2001 ★ 36 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 53 ₱15

Guingona has edge, Pimentel admits

By Juliet L. Javellana

OF the top two contenders for the vice presidency, Senate Minority Leader Teofisto Guingona Jr. is "much closer" to President Macapagal-Arroyo, the appointing power.

This was acknowledged yesterday by Guingona's rival himself, Senate President

GUINGONA/ A13

Serapio eyed as witness against Estrada

DOJ: Lawyer to testify in plunder case

EDWARD S. Serapio, a personal lawyer of ousted President Joseph Estrada, has reportedly agreed to testify against his boss in the graft and plunder cases filed against Estrada with the Ombudsman, a source at the Department of Justice yesterday said.

A member of the House prosecution panel in the Senate impeachment trial of Estrada confirmed that Serapio was ready to tell all.

Serapio is the second Estrada associate who has signified his intention to testify against Estrada after his impeachment trial on corruption and other charges collapsed.

The other is businessman Mark Jimenez, who packaged the multibillion-peso takeovers of PLDT by First Pacific and of PCI Bank by Equitable Bank.

Jimenez is facing extradition to the United States on charges of making illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party and of tax and mail fraud.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez had earlier told reporters that a member of Estrada's "inner circle" had offered to testify and provide the necessary "paper trail" to convict the former President. But Perez yesterday refused to either deny or confirm if the new witness he was referring to was Jimenez.

SERAPIO/ A14

JESS YUSON

SERAPIO, Estrada's lawyer: Doing a Jimenez.

SENATE RUN

Loi expected to do a Hillary

WILL she pull a Hillary?

Former first lady, Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, will run for the Senate in the May elections.

"She will do a Hillary," a source told the Inquirer yesterday, referring to the former American First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton who made history last November for being the first wife of a sitting US president to win a seat in the US Senate. Ejercito will run on the ticket of her husband's long dormant party, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP).

Ejercito's surprise candidacy along with 11 other senatorial candidates will be announced during the PMP convention at Club Filipino on Wednesday, Jan. 31.

Former President Joseph Estrada is scheduled to make an appearance, his first in public since he "stepped down," as he put it, from the presidency on Jan. 20. He is expected to address the convention.

The idea was reportedly suggested to Estrada during his recent meeting with the PMP's leading

LOI/ A14

VAL HANDUMON

DR. LOI EJERCITO could make history by becoming the first ex-first lady to win a Senate seat.

Erap ally asks SC to nullify Gloria rule

By Dona Pazzibugan
And Donna S. Cueto

CONTROVERSIAL lawyer Oliver Lozano yesterday asked the Supreme Court to declare Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo "acting President" and her ousted predecessor, Joseph Estrada, "President on leave."

"Estrada has not resigned. Nobody can produce his resignation letter stating that he has resigned for there is none," Lozano said in his petition.

About 100 Estrada supporters also rallied outside the high tribunal, waving large white placards with a "?" in red spray paint and chanting support for the disgraced leader.

They filed a separate formal request urging the high court to outline the legal basis for Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.'s swearing in of Ms Macapagal on Jan. 20 at the height of People Power II.

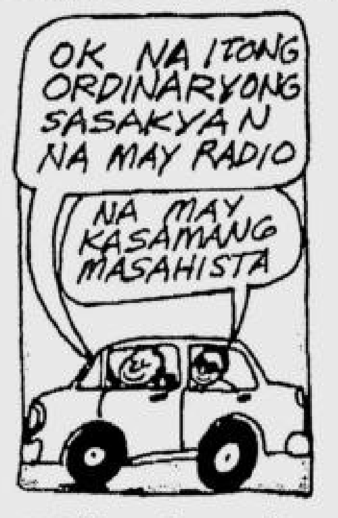
In a legal opinion sought by Executive Secretary Renato de Villa, however, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez pointed out that Estrada's Jan. 20 press statement "clearly evinced his intention to relinquish the presidency."

"And such an intention was coupled with the actual relinquishment of the office when he left Malacañang Palace, the seat of the presidency, on that same date," Perez added.

Three petitions were filed earlier asking the high court to affirm the constitutionality of Ms Macapagal's assumption of the presidency.

The tribunal is expected to take up the three petitions and that of Lozano in a

ERAP/ A14



OK NA ITONG ORDINARYONG SASAKYAN NA MAY RADIO
NA MAY KASAMANG MASAHISTA

Riding in style: Erap exec loved a good massage

By Christine Avendaño

LUXURY—and a good massage—was apparently on the mind of at least one official of the former Estrada administration who was issued a high-end car that the new government plans to recall along with other expensive official vehicles.

The car, issued to the Department of Tourism, was reportedly equipped with a TV set and a massage facility.

"I think there was someone in Malacañang who was a spendthrift," Executive Secretary Renato de Villa said yesterday in a radio interview, mentioning

RIDING/ A13

4 tax-free cars for Maceda exposed

VAL HANDUMON

LUCK runs out on former Philippine envoy to the US, Ernesto Maceda, shown here wearing a horseshoe ring. He couldn't take home his car of choice, a Mercedes 2000 S-500.

By Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER Ambassador to Washington Ernesto Maceda last December asked then President Estrada to exempt him from paying at least P9.3 million in duties on four luxury vehicles he was planning to import, after being turned down by the Department of Foreign Affairs, according to a DFA source.

Maceda, Estrada's former impeachment trial spokesperson, requested the DFA to waive the taxes early last December, said the source. The department denied the request on the grounds that Maceda was not eligible to claim a tax-exemption privilege granted to diplomats abroad who want to bring vehicles into the Philippines.

Former Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon Jr., in a memo dated Dec. 7, 2000, informed Malacañang that Maceda had not

4 TAX-FREE/ A13

Macapagal warned of Edsa III if…

By Doris C. Dumlao
and Christine Avendaño

THE HEAD of the Lopez business and media conglomerate yesterday warned President Macapagal-Arroyo of Edsa III should her administration fail "to create the conditions to make a moral revolution possible."

Oscar Lopez, chair and CEO of Benpres Holdings Corp., said during his acceptance speech as the "Management Man of the Year 2000" awardee of the influential business group, Management Association of the Philippines, that the much-desired moral revolution would be fulfilled only if the lessons of Edsa II were taken to heart.

"…President (Macapagal) must realize that she was put in power by the people, not to conduct government and business as usual such

MACAPAGAL/ A14

Abat agrees Abadia appointment not good

By Donna S. Cueto
and Dave M. Veridiano

RETIRED Gen. Fortunato Abat has added his voice to the growing protests over President Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment to her Cabinet of people with pending criminal cases, such as National Security Adviser Lisandro Abadia.

"There should be transparency. The people with cases, the people who are traditional politicians, she should not appoint them," Abat said at the annual convention of the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association held Saturday in Camp Aguinaldo.

Abat, who led a group of retired generals in calling for then President Joseph Estrada's resignation, later told the Inquirer: "She should put new faces (in the Cabinet), not traditional politicians who have self-interests."

He said that "because of evidence" of irregularities in the Retirement, Separation and Benefits System (RSBS), the Armed Forces' pension fund that Abadia chaired for a time, the President should have waited for the case to be resolved before appointing the latter.

At a press forum yesterday at the Manila Hotel, Senate Minority Leader Teofisto Guingona said Ms Macapagal should review the appointment of not only Abadia but also Deputy Director General Leandro Mendoza as chief of the Philippine National Police.

Guingona said the review should be done immediately, especially if evidence showed the two officials' involvement in illegal activities.

Mendoza's appointment as PNP chief had drawn protest from Carina Agarao of the Crusade Against Violence, who said he might have had a hand in the recent escape from jail of her husband's confessed killer.

"As far as Mendoza is concerned, if it's true that he was the

ABAT/ A14

Second FRONT PAGE

TAMANG PARAAN 'YAN!

Now, it's all-out peace in South

By Carlito Pablo

FROM an all-out war policy during the Estrada administration, the Department of National Defense will take the path of peace in dealing with the communist and Moro insurgencies, Acting Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita declared yesterday.

Ermita said that if needed, a temporary ceasefire would be declared to jumpstart the stalled talks with the communist-led National Democratic Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"Peace shall be our first priority," Ermita said in a speech at the turnover ceremonies at the defense department inside Camp Aguinaldo preparatory to his replacement of outgoing Secretary Orlando Mercado.

Ermita said the DND would focus on the peace process, saying it was the "core of the healing and rebuilding process" President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to set in motion.

Ermita, who is concurrently the Presidential Adviser on, the Peace Process, said the DND would consequently have a "reorientation" of its overall strategy on the insurgencies.

Sources in Davao City said government and MILF emissaries were set to hold "low key" talks in Cotabato City on Wednesday as a prelude to the resumption of formal peace negotiations.

Undersecretary Jesus Dureza, presidential assistant for southeastern Mindanao, said yesterday he was "neither denying nor confirming" the holding of the exploratory talks.

He also reminded the public not to expect "dramatic results" this early.

"This is a long-drawn process. We will just have to work again and pick up the pieces," Dureza said.

Prof. Moner Bajunaid, a member of the disbanded MILF committee on the peace process, said Dureza's action was a "good start" in building goodwill and confidence in the peace talks.

Bajunaid said based on the pronouncements of MILF leaders, the rebel group was also taking some moves to bring the peace process "back on the right track."

"I won't be surprised if there would be exploratory talks in the next few days or weeks," Bajunaid said.

He said the MILF viewed President Macapagal as "more enlightened" with regard to the peace process and the problems of Mindanao than her predecessor, Joseph Estrada.

He stressed that the MILF leadership was also interested in seeking a final resolution to the Mindanao conflict through the resumption of the peace talks.

Also yesterday, the Abu Sayyaf offered to negotiate with the Macapagal government over the release of two remaining hostages.

Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya said he was giving Macapagal 72 hours to resume negotiations for American tourist Jeffrey Schilling and Filipino dive instructor Roland Ullah; the last hostages left from a kidnapping spree by the bandits last year.

Sabaya warned his group "will continue the hostilities" in Mindanao if the government failed to act on the offer.

He said Schilling was coughing blood and "and is very sick and in his worst condition ever" since August, when he was snatched by Abu Sayyaf gunmen after willingly walking into their camp in Jolo island. *With reports from Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AFP*

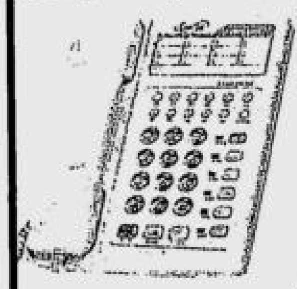
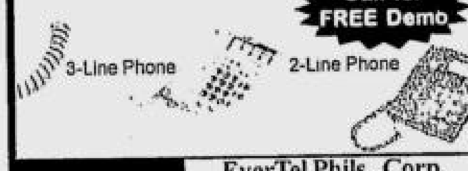
Erap exile bucked

DAVAO CITY—The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan yesterday criticized President Macapagal's statement that she was leaving it up to ousted President Joseph Estrada to decide whether or not to go into exile.

Alvin Luque, secretary general of Bayan-Davao City, said it is the President's responsibility to keep Estrada in the country considering that charges of economic plunder and other high crimes have already been filed against him.

She should order Estrada's immediate arrest as the charge of economic plunder carries the death sentence, he said.

Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Let's think big on tourism, Gordon tells DOT

TOURISM Secretary Richard J. Gordon yesterday said a positive culture of tourism is needed for the Philippines to achieve an increase in tourism arrivals.

"A culture of tourism exists if citizens know that tourism can help better their lives," Gordon told tourism personnel after the flag ceremony at the DOT.

He said the DOT will be propelled by work ethic and ordered the setting up of a 24-hour tourist assistance desk. "We will be fast, friendly, flexible and forward-looking," he said.

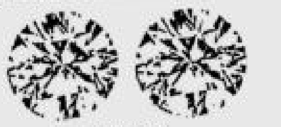
"It is the DOT people's job to show the world we are the best and that we are heroes. The Filipino people was a hero twice in Edsa," he said.

Calling Filipinos the "pride of the world," the tourism chief enjoined the frontline tourism employees in rallying Filipinos to sell their country to the world with pride.

"We have to think big," he said.

He said it is the DOT's task to make the ordinary Filipino understand the impact of presenting his best to the world. "When our citizens understand this, then the Philippine tourism turnaround starts."

Gordon, the former chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, rallied the DOT to join him in changing the attitude of the Filipino that works against achievement. "There is a lot of cynicism running around. But first we must believe we can do things to better the lives of our people," he said.



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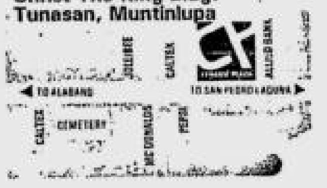

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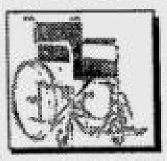

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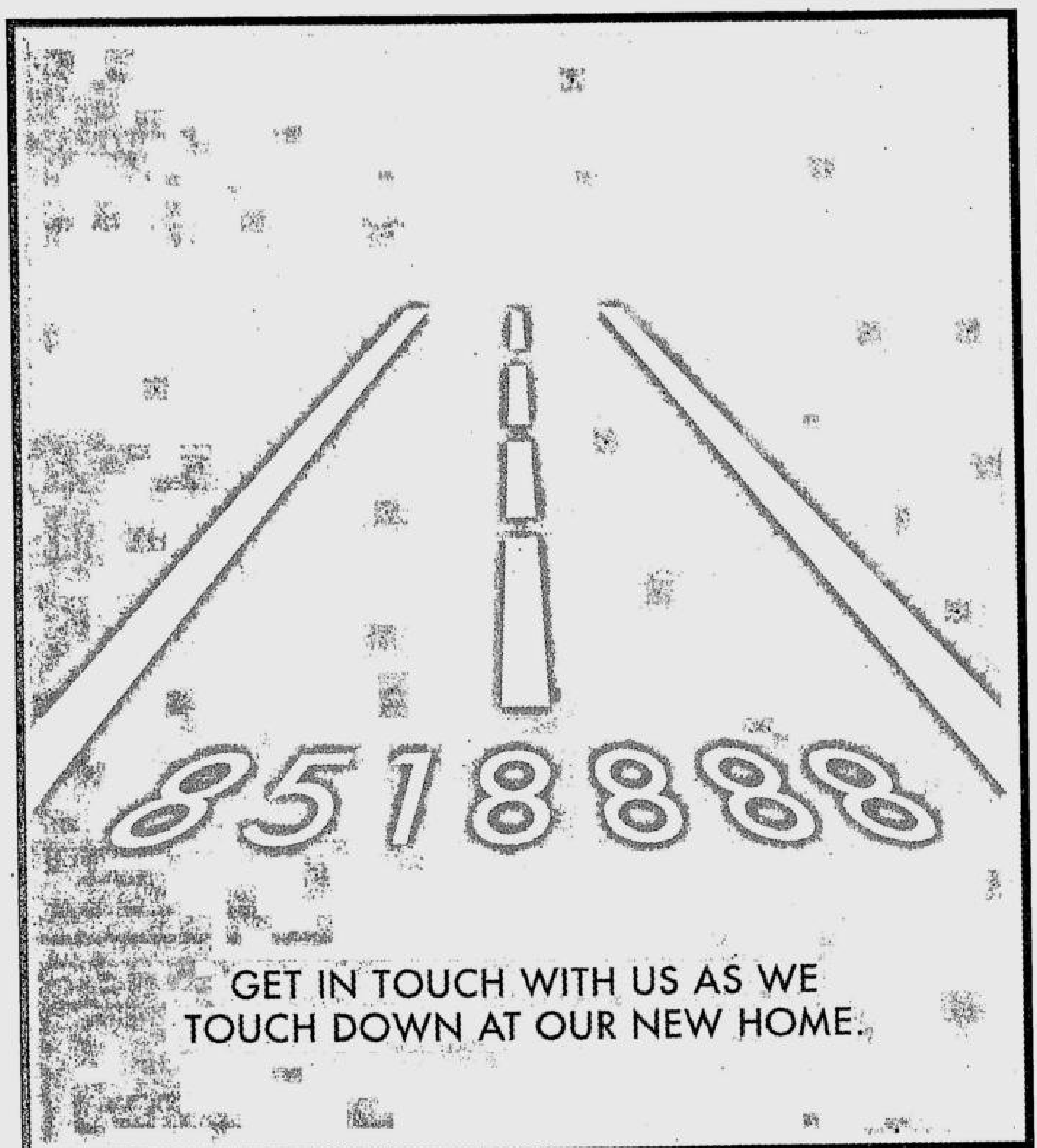
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1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (through the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS)) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in various currencies towards the financing of Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for supply and delivery of Office Equipment to Selected Division and District Offices in the Philippines.
2. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), Project Implementation Support Unit (PISU) for Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of office equipment.
3. For the purpose of this bidding, eligible bidders shall be those who have experience in the supply or selling and distribution or delivery of office equipment to remote areas in a developing country like the Philippines.
4. Interested eligible bidders may inspect the bidding documents at or obtain further information from the Office of PBAC for Foreign Assisted Projects, Second Floor, Rizal Building I, DECS Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Tel. Nos. (632) 636-6542 or 632-1361 local 2115 or 2085, Telefax No. (632) 635-3762.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting January 29, 2001 upon submission of letter of intent to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).
6. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the World Bank *Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Goods.*
7. Bids must be delivered to the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines, on or before 10:00 AM on March 7, 2001 and must be accompanied by a security of two (2) percent of total bid price.
8. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 AM on March 7, 2001 at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.
9. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on February 14, 2001, 10:00 AM, at the address indicated in paragraph 8.

(Sgd.) **RAMON C. BACANI**
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(PDI – Jan. 30, Feb 1 & 3, 2001)

Pimentel stays at Senate helm

IT SEEMS Senate President Aquilino Pimentel will stay in his post despite his resignation. With only a few session left, the Senate is not likely to undergo any reorganization, Sen. Teofisto Guingona said yesterday.

Guingona, speaking at a press forum at the Manila Hotel, said the Senate's top concern now was to finish its deliberations on two pending bills, including one on the budget for this year.

"So far there has been no reorganization. We have only two weeks left in the Senate and we want to push through with whatever bills are left. There are two important bills: the budget and the power bill," he said. "We'll see if reorganization is still needed."

Pimentel resigned on Jan. 16 following the controversial vote by 11 senators not to open sealed documents pertaining to the alleged P3.3-billion account of ousted President Joseph Estrada at his impeachment trial. So far, the Senate has not elected a new president. *TJ Burgonio*

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Senatorial slate is test of unity for Edsa forces

By Juliet L. Javellana

THIS EARLY the administration coalition dubbed "Edsa Forces" is facing its first test of unity.

Born during the Edsa II uprising, the "Forces" comprise the ruling Lakas Party and the smaller Aksyon Demokratiko, Reporma, Promdi and Liberal parties that banded, together against the impeached Joseph Estrada.

Members of Lakas, new President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, are said to be complaining about being left out of the Forces' senatorial slate in the May elections.

"There were hard feelings among the old guards of Lakas," said Sen. Juan Flavier, a re-electionist.

Senate Minority Leader Teofisto Guingona Jr., Lakas president, confirmed this.

"There are apprehensions but that is to be expected in any coalition where there are four parties now instead of only one. There should be adjustments next week," Guingona said.

Flavier said Lakas will meet at Malacañang today to "solidify the senatorial slate."

Flavier said the "working formula" would be to give six senatorial slots to Lakas and six slots to the other parties.

For Lakas, Flavier said the probable candidates are himself, representatives Ernesto Herrera, Heherson Alvarez and Sergio Apostol and former Bulacan Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan. He said the party is looking for a woman to fill the sixth slot.

Flavier said the candidates from the other parties could be re-electionist senators Franklin Drilon and Ramon Magsaysay Jr., former speaker Manuel Villar, Rep. Joker Arroyo, former National Economic Development Authority director general Solita Monsod and lawyer Francis Pangilinan. *With a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

'FISCAL DISCIPLINE' URGED

No money for ₱725-B budget

By Donna S. Cueto

THE NEW administration will have to "revise" the P725-billion budget submitted by the previous Estrada government because it does not have the money to fund it, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said yesterday.

She said President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to bring "fiscal discipline" back to government to avoid the possibility of the budget deficit again growing to over P100 billion.

She said the budget deficit now stood at P136 billion.

In a radio interview, Boncodin said the government would not be able to provide funds for the budget proposal because of the revenue shortfall.

Some government projects would thus have to be deferred, she said.

But she assured that basic services such as education and health, as well as government salaries and the budget of local government units would be funded.

In Davao City, Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said the government would not be initiating new big infrastructure projects during its first 100 days because of budgetary constraints.

He said the government would instead concentrate on improving the services of its various departments and agencies.

A review of ongoing infrastructure projects, which have been moving very slowly is also on his list of priorities, Alvarez said.

"Our study showed that it would really be difficult for the government to fund the budget submitted by the previous government," Boncodin said over dzMM.

She said the country had been having huge deficits of more than P100 billion for three years in a row and the new economic officials have agreed that fiscal discipline was needed.

She said the Estrada government's pump priming—or spending to stimulate demand—policy had contributed to the budget deficit.

Boncodin is confident, however, that the economy would recover and pick up now that the political crisis is over.

"(The economy) should be up and about. If before, investors had a wait-and-see attitude, now they would be more bullish because our political problem has been resolved," she said.

She added that the Philippines would be more economically competitive now.

Boncodin said that the "accounts payable" left by the previous administration reached P70 billion.

Estrada administration officials said that it inherited these in turn from the Aquino and Ramos administrations.

They said the fall of the peso was the main reason for the huge budget deficit.

Boncodin said that Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo had set a revenue target of P500 billion for the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The improved and efficient collection of taxes is the key, instead of borrowing more money to plug the hole created by the budget deficit, Boncodin said. *With a report from Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Sin backs new PNP chief

By N. Bordadora

MANILA Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin yesterday gave his pastoral blessings to the new Philippine National Police chief Deputy Director General Lenadro Mendoza, and other top brass of the police organization amidst accusations that new police chief was linked to kidnapping and illegal gambling.

Sin blessed the police officers in a simple prayer and went on to tell them to protect all Filipinos and promote peace with the New People's Army, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and even with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao.

Mendoza, members of the PNP directorial staff and other high-ranking police officials yesterday went to the archbishop's palace at the Villa San Miguel.

2 more cronies to testify vs Erap

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Martin P. Marfil

TWO more cronies of former president Joseph Estrada have offered to testify against him in the corruption and plunder cases he is facing, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said yesterday.

Perez made the revelation even as he would neither confirm nor deny that the controversial businessman Mark Jimenez had earlier volunteered to testify against his friend, Estrada.

"I can't confirm or deny that it is Jimenez but we do have a witness who was close enough to the former president. At the right time we will reveal his identity. We're continuing to interview him," Perez told reporters yesterday.

He did say that two others known to be close to Estrada had "sent feelers" through their lawyers who came to see him yesterday.

"They are interested in testifying against Estrada," Perez said.

DOJ insiders said the two could be BW Resources Corp. chair Dante Tan and businessman Jaime Dichaves.

Perez said one of the two unidentified cronies divulged other irregularities allegedly committed by Estrada which were not uncovered in his impeachment trial.

An informed source confirmed that the DOJ has interviewed Jimenez and he corroborated the testimony of former Finance secretary Edgardo Espiritu that Estrada acquired shares in BW Resources.

Without confirming that it was Jimenez, Perez admitted yesterday that he and other DOJ lawyers met with the first witness on Friday.

He said they were able to confirm "that Estrada indeed was part owner of BW Resources."

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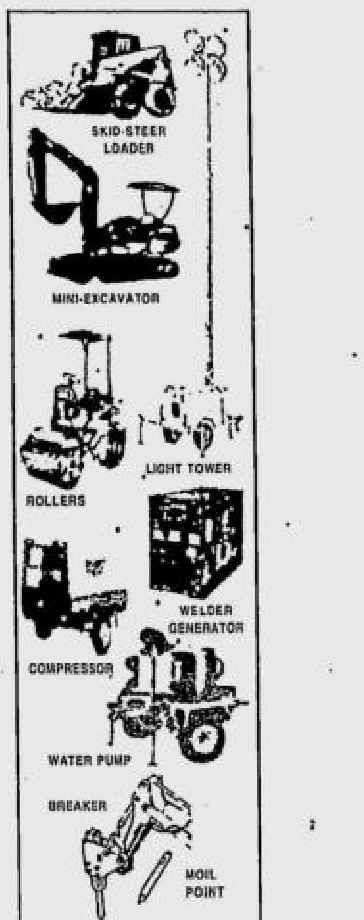

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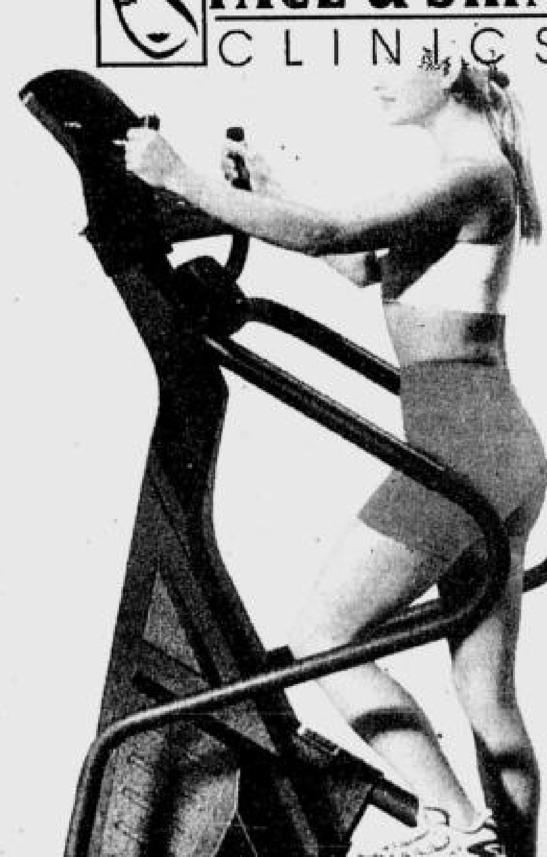

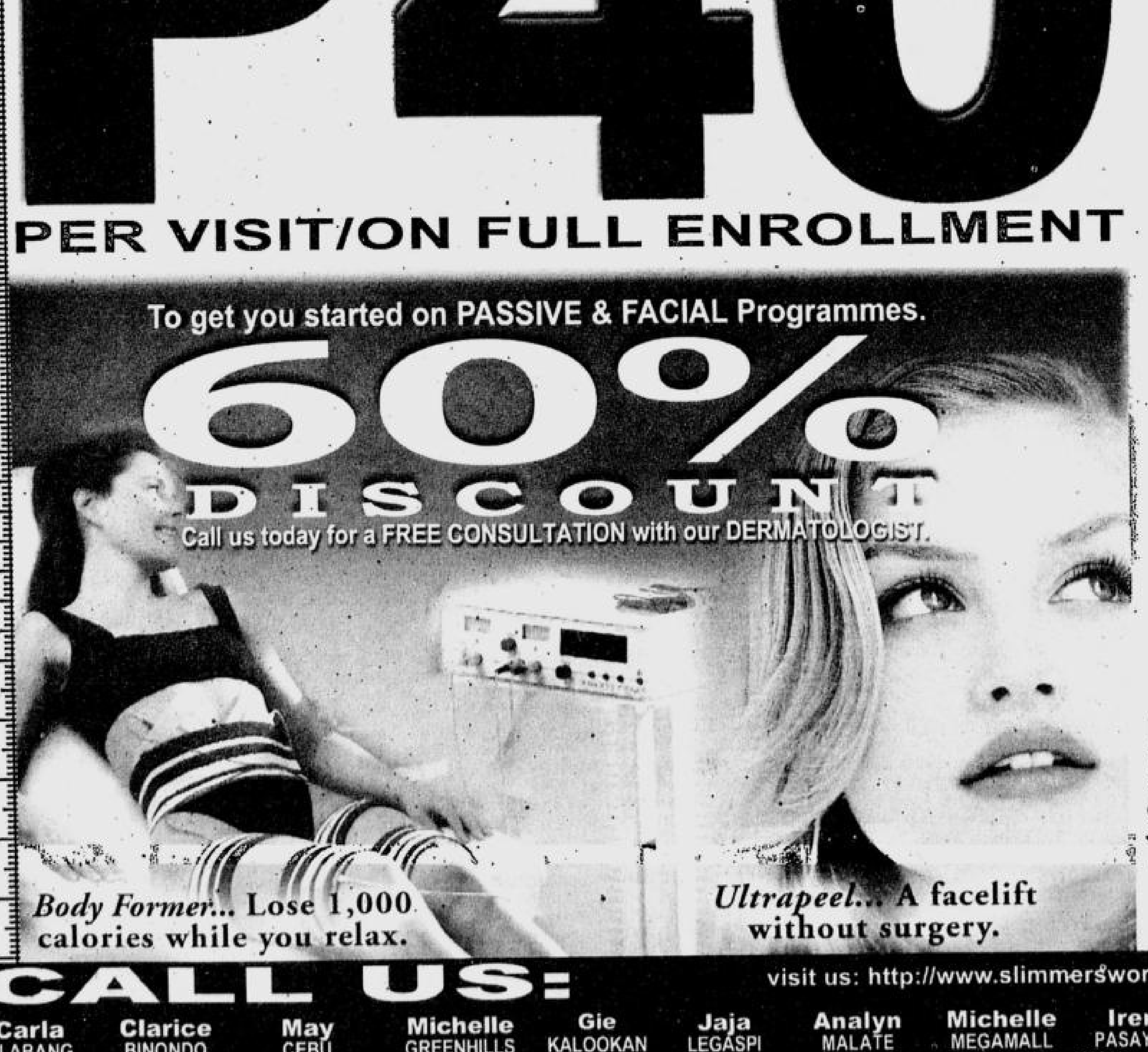
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Face the music

EDITORIAL

SHOULD the ousted president, Joseph Estrada, be exiled or not? This is one of the big questions now confronting the Macapagal administration. His successor, President Macapagal, said that the answer to this question will have to be provided by Estrada himself. "That's Estrada's call," she said.

If Senate President Aquilino Pimentel and Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, would have their way, they would rather that Estrada be forced to go into exile. They said that exile would remove "a rallying point" for Estrada's followers to destabilize the new administration.

Pimentel and Quevedo are immediately concerned with the problem of stability and normality, but what about justice and retribution? If Estrada were to be exiled, there is no assurance that he would return to face the many cases that have been filed and will still be filed against him. If a case of plunder were filed against him, would he return to the Philippines, knowing that he faces the possibility of being sentenced to death? From the country of exile he could fly to another country with which the Philippines has no extradition treaty and he would be out of the reach of the law.

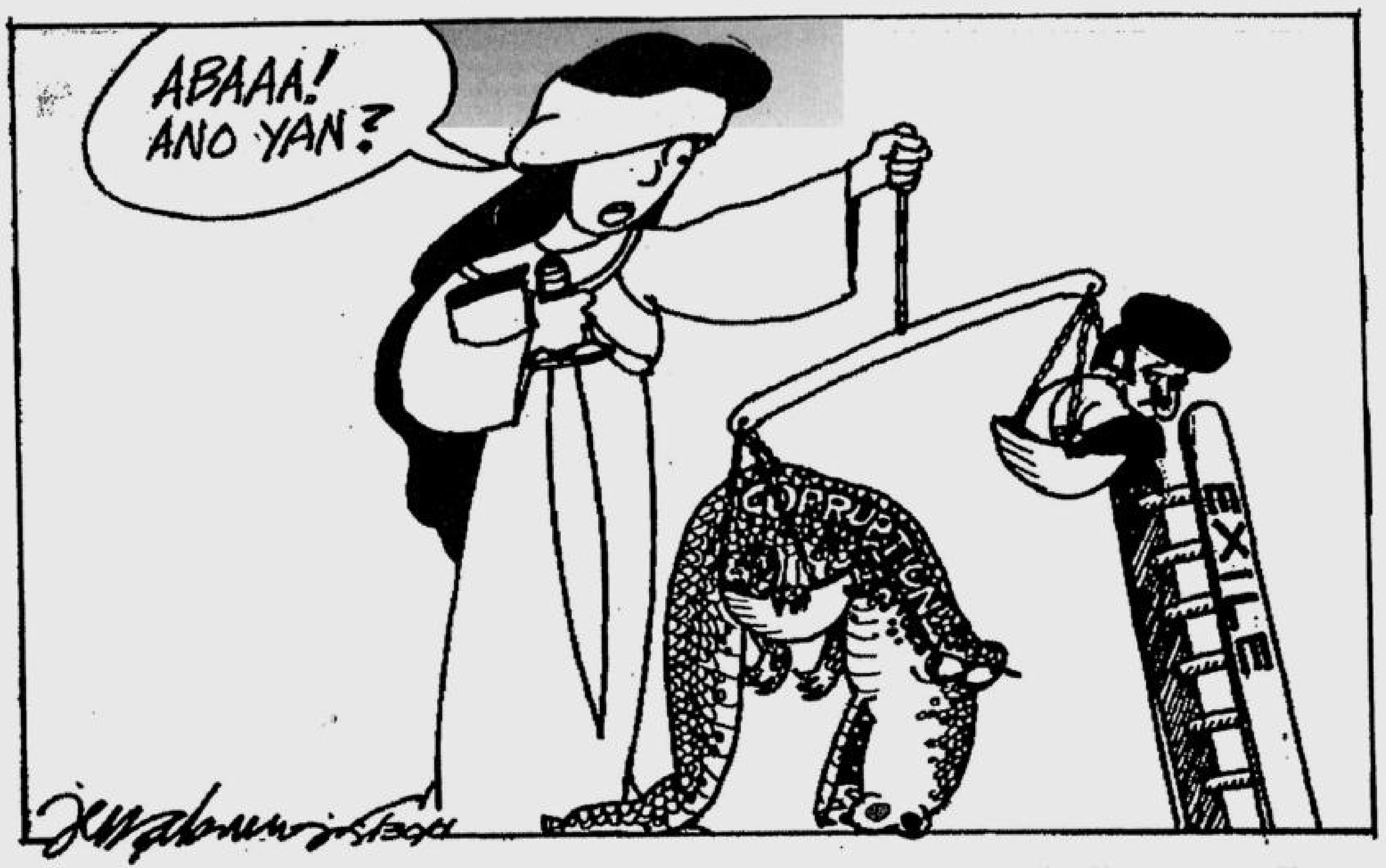
Exiling Estrada would give us no assurance that he and his followers would not try to destabilize the Macapagal administration. The deposed dictator, Ferdinand E. Marcos, was exiled 8,000 kilometers away in Hawaii, but that didn't deter his supporters from trying to destabilize the Aquino administration. One of the first attempts to topple the Aquino administration was led by former Sen. Arturo M. Tolentino, Marcos' running mate in the 1986 snap presidential election, who took over the Manila Hotel with a contingent of loyalist soldiers. A similar attempt, led by a surrogate leader for Estrada, could possibly be undertaken even if Estrada were to be exiled to a faraway country. With the billions Estrada and his cronies have amassed, they can do anything by remote control.

We believe the better alternative to exile is the immediate prosecution of Estrada. The government should charge him with a non-bailable offense like plunder, and have him arrested and locked up in a maximum security detention cell. It should also file cases for the sequestration of his alleged ill-gotten wealth so that he can't use the money to finance coup attempts or other destabilization moves.

The Macapagal administration should not rely on the Ombudsman to seriously pursue the cases against Estrada. The record of Ombudsman Aniano Desierto in the handling of major cases is lamentable, to say the least. The Estrada cases cannot be entrusted to him. A special body, composed of prosecutors and a judge or judges of impeccable integrity, should be formed to just attend to the cases against Estrada. Its work would in effect be a continuation of the proceedings started in the Senate impeachment court, except that a higher level of proof would have to be required to obtain Estrada's conviction.

The former president should not be given the choice of whether he should go into exile or not. He has no choice but to face the cases to be filed against him here, in the country that he has defiled. Justice demands that he stay here to face the music. He has to answer to the people for his crimes. He should not go into exile where he can rest, relax and enjoy his questionable billions. He should be kept constantly on his toes with a myriad of cases to be filed against him so that he would have no time and opportunity to think of moving to destabilize the Macapagal administration.

The nation has already had a lesson in People Power I. It allowed the biggest crook of all, former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, to get away and live in exile in Hawaii. Up to now, the great bulk of the billions the Marcoses stole from the people has not been recovered. Up to now, there has been no retribution for the many crimes he committed against the nation. Up to now, there has been no closure to one of the worst cases of plunder in modern political history. Will we allow former President Estrada to go into exile and do a Marcos? Will People Power II see a repeat of the Marcos case?



Public officials should be exempt from Bank Secrecy Law

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SENATORS Aquilino Pimentel and Teofisto Guingona are both worthy to be vice president. Too bad only one of them can be appointed to the position. Sen. Raul Roco should not be vice president; he is good enough to be president.

Both Pimentel and Guingona come from Mindanao, so either of them would complement, regionally, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who comes from Luzon.

But Guingona has the edge. He is the president of Lakas-NUCD-UMDP-KAMPI, Macapagal's party; and he is Senate minority leader. Moreover, Pimentel refused to sign a Senate resolution authored by Guingona expressing support for Macapagal.

Many persons and groups now claim credit for People Power II, which ousted Erap, but it was Guingona who first called for the resignation of President Erap. Way back on April 3 last year, when it was still a lonely thing to do, Guingona read an open letter on the Senate floor demanding that Erap resign because of bad government, the deteriorating economy, the rise in crime, cronyism and corruption at the highest places. It was a startling assault on Erap, who was barely 22 months in power after a landslide victory. Even Guingona's own party endorsed it only guardedly, officially declaring it as a personal "act of conscience."

But the open letter accurately described national conditions. It pointed to a distorted sense of honor, honesty and moral values. It pictured a nation awash in crime, corruption, cronyism, gambling, smuggling, drugs. It pictured a Mindanao awash in blood and suffering refugees.

It pictured a President without vision and a country without direction except downhill.

"People no longer believe," Guingona said. "They have lost faith. Many even have lost hope. Shall we allow the nation to slide further to perdition? It pains me therefore to humbly but resolutely ask you to resign."

It was the first official demand for Erap's resignation from one of the highest elected officials of the land.

Before Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson made his exposé that lighted the fuse of the impeachment bomb, he went to Guingona for help. On Oct. 4, 2000, Guingona made his "I Accuse" speech in the Senate that embodied Singson's exposé:

"I accuse President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, President of the Republic of the Philippines, of betraying public trust…

"I accused Joseph Estrada, President of the Republic the Philippines, of graft and corruption…

"I accuse Joseph Ejercito Estrada, President of the Republic of the Philippines, of violating his own oath of office to enforce the law…"

It brought on an investigation by the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Pimentel, and it was downhill all the way for Joseph Ejercito Estrada from that point on. His Dirty Eleven senators suppressed evidence in the impeachment trial which angered the people so much that they took to the streets and eventually to Edsa for People Power II, which ousted Erap and made Macapagal president.

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***Gloria in excelsis deo* for the Macapagal administration for banning luxury vehicles among government officials. (Is Macapagal making sure former Sen. Rene Saguisag will not join her government?) Another hallelujah for that executive order banning relatives from having deals with the government. And still another hail for that policy enjoining public officials to live "simple lives."**

These policies Macapagal learned from her father, former President Diosdado Macapagal. When her father was vice president, he was assigned an old car that frequently broke down. But he never asked for a new luxury car. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him from visiting almost every corner of the Philippines to campaign for the presidency.

Like President Ramon Magsaysay before him, Macapagal also banned his relatives from having any business deals with the government. And he set the example for public officials to lead simple lives. He even promoted the use of the cheap "Pagasa" cloth as a means to simple and inexpensive living. Besides the "Pagasa" cloth, he introduced for himself the long-sleeved polo shirt which was cheaper but more durable than the *barong Tagalog*. The long-sleeved polo shirt, which looked like the *barong* without the embroidery, became the official, even formal, wear.

Macapagal should go one step further. She should certify a bill to Congress exempting public officials from the coverage of the Bank Secrecy Law, and another bill prohibiting and punishing the use of aliases and numbers for bank accounts.

Marcos, Erap and other public officials were able to amass ill-gotten wealth because they were able to hide them in bank accounts. It is only now that we are discovering the billions in ill-gotten wealth that Erap stashed in many banks under assumed names and numbered accounts. Only by complete transparency can we stop corruption in government.

Public officials who don't steal need not be afraid of being out of the coverage of the Bank Secrecy Law. If they have nothing to hide, what is there to be afraid of? It is those who hide ill-gotten wealth who would oppose such a move. But if they want to keep their bank deposits secret, all they have to do is not accept appointments to the government.

* * *

TODAY'S Gloria joke:
These are the recent Philippine presidents:
Marcos, the first dictator-president.
Aquino, the first woman president.
Ramos, the first military president.
Estrada, the first impeached president.
Macapagal, the first Pokemon president.

Our story

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A *KABABAYAN* from Bicol wrote me an interesting letter saying he personally did not see why we need to credit anybody, the NGO and people's organizations included, for being at Edsa first or last. He too was at Edsa, and he went there not with a thought for personal glory or honor but only with a thought for his children's present and future. He went there out of moral compulsion, out of a desire to do what was right, out of desire to not let evil triumph again. That his contribution, however infinitesimally small, helped to oust Erap was recompense enough. That the experience rekindled in his heart a sense of civics and social obligation was reward enough.

I sympathize with his sentiments completely. I imagine he speaks for an entire multitude when he says that being there at Edsa was fulfillment enough in itself. But I beg to disagree about it being unnecessary to credit the people who truly made Edsa possible.

At the very least, that is so because other people **are** taking credit for it. I do think there is something fundamentally unjust when the one person who has benefited—some will say undeservedly—from People Power II, who is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, remembers to mention the Armed Forces and police officials who joined the throng massed at Edsa at the last minute but not the activists who did so at the first. The "first" minute indeed dating back to when Edsa 2 was just another Eraption; the idea that the most popular president in Philippine history could be toppled by an act of popular will sounded like a joke then. But the repercussions of Macapagal's "oversight" went beyond ingratitude. It opened the floodgates of the rewriting of the events of the recent past.

Just days after that, everyone would jump on the bandwagon. The top officials of the AFP and PNP were first, suddenly discovering that if not for them, Edsa would not have happened. Indeed, discovering that they had always opposed Erap, if only in their hearts, which they finally revealed at the appropriate moment. They were the ones who were maneuvering behind the scenes and constituted real power, while others merely shouted in the streets and banged their fists on walls.

Not to be bested, Peping Cojuangco would sulk and say he had been betrayed by a government he put in power. He it was who gave Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson the moral and physical support he needed to come out and damn his *kumpare*, which was the shot that brought Erap down. If not for him, Erap would still be free to turn the country into one giant casino—instead of one giant cockpit, as Cojuangco might have preferred—and torment Jaime Cardinal Sin and all pious Filipinos.

Sin and Cory Aquino have not themselves been claiming credit for People Power II, but only because they have their cheerleaders to do it. The first time I heard it was at Edsa itself when an announcer introduced Aquino as the heroine of Edsa 1 and the heroine of Edsa 2. And when another announcer introduced Sin as the voice people harked to at the first Edsa and the voice people harked to at the second Edsa. Of course, both contributed mightily to the cause—though I recall writing a column in October criticizing Cory (and Noynoy) for saying the situation was not Edsa—but this is bending the truth out of shape.

This is not merely a case of taking credit, this is a case of rewriting history. I've always thought the greatest theft the leaders of this country have wreaked on their people is not the theft of their money but the theft of their story. Not the theft of their cash but the theft of their past, not the theft of their coffers but the theft of their honor, not the theft of their body but the theft of their soul. That is the biggest loss a people may suffer. A history, a past, a story—that is what defines a people; that is what gives them meaning and purpose; that is what gives them life and energy. You take away their story and you take away their meaning and purpose, you take away their present and future.

The colonial rulers understood that and gave their own version of what happened in the past, the Spaniards saying they rescued the Filipinos from eternal damnation by introducing Christianity to them, and the Americans saying they rescued the Filipinos from temporary damnation by introducing civilization to them. The effects of those versions of history we are still feeling today in what is called "colonial mentality." Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada understood that and supplied myth in lieu of history—though in many ways *history* is myth, if by this is meant the many stories we tell ourselves about ourselves—Marcos saying he rescued us from the Japanese, as shown by his spurious war medals and even more spurious war wounds, and Erap saying he rescued the poor from the henchmen of the *haciendero kontrabida*, as shown by his movies. The effects of those versions of life we are still feeling today in the Marcos and Erap loyalists.

Aquino understood that and said the blood of her husband rescued her countrymen from a fate worse than debt. Or the blood of her husband alone—not those who were tortured, who disappeared, who were "salvaged long before they decided to return to the Philippines from America, whose blood did not count because it was as red as the color of their flag. The effects of that version of history we are still reeling from—in the pillage wreaked by the Kamaganak Inc., as the late Louie Beltran felicitously called it, and in the monumental corruption in government that it spawned.

That is the power of a story.

And that is what the various self-appointed rescuers of Philippine honor, dignity and freedom are trying to tell—or capture. Which is the one thing we may **not** allow ourselves to lose again: Our story, the story of a people who listened and learned, who felt outraged and embittered, who rose to reclaim the life they had lost. The story of activists and people's organizations and NGOs and the youth and farmers and fishermen and factory hands and barbers and artists and housekeepers and blind beggars who came to Edsa to end another tyranny. Even before we worry about the opportunists and hustlers occupying all the key positions in government and betraying us once again, let us worry about the opportunists and hustlers occupying all corners of our minds and making us forget once again. Before we worry about the operators stealing our money all over again, let us worry about the spin doctors stealing our story all over again.

Enough of the world according to their gospel. It's time we told our story.

Jockeying for positions

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A lot of the seeming discontent with the Macapagal administration is coming from groups or blocs that have made nominations for appointment to key positions with little success. For every appointment, as they say, there are 10 "dis-appointments." For the post of environment and natural resources secretary, for instance, there are over 100 aspirants! To be sure, jockeying for positions and keen rivalry happen in every administration. In the new dispensation, however, there seems to be more malcontents for one reason: unlike in past administrations where only the politicians who were left out of power were unhappy and fretful, now every Pedro, Pablo or Juan who was at Edsa Dos thinks he ought to have a say in the appointments made by President Macapagal. It has been repeatedly said that she owes no one but the people. The trouble is that they are now taking that seriously.

* * *

For instance, a big NGO is said to be upset that their nominee, former Naga Mayor and Magsaysay awardee Jesse Robredo did not get the DILG post. It went to Laguna Gov. Joey Lina instead. Undoubtedly Robredo would make a good DILG secretary, but so would Lina. *Ganyan talaga*. It must be assumed that those who are nominated by responsible groups are outstanding, and rare are the *palpak* cases. But in the end only one can be chosen. One question is: Where was Robredo during the escalation of opposition to Estrada? Lina was the first governor, and a LAMP member at that, to withdraw his support from the Estrada administration. Then he became a prime mover in the opposition rallies all the way to Edsa Dos.

* * *

Earlier I wrote that Executive Secretary Renato De Villa is more of a "Cory man" than a "Ramos man." That has to be qualified further. Recall that it had been earlier bruited that Aquino would support De Villa's presidential candidacy in 1998, but she ended backing Fred Lim reportedly because De Villa hesitated to join her in the anti-charter change campaign in 1997. Actually, De Villa is more closely identified with the Ayala group of Makati, from whose ranks sprang new Presidential Management Staff chief Vicky Garchitorena.

One indication that De Villa's group enjoys quite a bit of power in the Palace is that the only House member from his Reporma Party, Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez of Davao del Norte, a first-termer and former deputy airport manager bagged the much-coveted Department of Transportation and Communications. Another De Villa recommendee is acting Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, whose third term at the House as Batangas representative is ending. Ermita's wife is the aunt of De Villa's wife and the two retired generals were classmates at the PMA. It's not fair, however, to ascribe Ermita's bagging the post of peace negotiator and acting DND chief only to his links with De Villa. The suave and diplomatic Ermita participated in various negotiations with the MNLF during the Ramos years, and he would make a good negotiator.

* * *

Former Speaker Joe de Venecia left the House of Representatives nearly three years ago but his colleagues still seek his advice in sticky situations. As Lakas president, Joe serves as an untitled consultant to the new President on House matters, since Macapagal never served in that chamber. Soon after Edsa Dos, he had proposed to keep Noli Fuentebella in the speakership in exchange for the latter's support for the new government and passing the 2001 budget and the power bill on which the release of some $800 million in multilateral aid was dependent. But the young Turks of the party, flushed with the Edsa victory, couldn't countenance an NPC speaker, and one or two of them denounced De Venecia's "meddling." Three days after Macapagal assumed power, the Lakas representatives met with her out at her mother's North Forbes residence. Her answer: If you think you have the numbers, go ahead and replace Fuentebella.

* * *

The older Lakas leaders came back to De Venecia. He invited both Fuentebella and Minority Leader Sonny Belmonte to his residence for breakfast, just hours before the House vote on the leadership issue last Jan. 24. In the end De Venecia's win-win formula prevailed. Former Speaker Manuel Villar withdrew his challenge and Fuentebella opted not to run anymore, convinced by De Venecia to exit as speaker "undefeated." The Lakas lawmakers threw their support to Belmonte, who got a token resistance from LDP's Butz Aquino. It's this undeniable gift for forging win-win compromises that De Venecia, who will run for his old House seat in May, can provide to Macapagal.

* * *

New housing czar Mike Defensor called the other day to explain an item that appeared here recently. I had written that when Rep. Heherson Alvarez launched the impeachment resolution in the House, he managed to get only Rep. Ernesto Herrera's signature. Alvarez turned to some 28 NGOs who became the co-complainants. I also said Defensor called up then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Rome to ask her as a ranking Lakas official to order that the resolution not be filed. I learned about this from Macapagal herself when I interviewed her in the Eternal City last Oct. 12.

Defensor explained that he called Macapagal not because he did not believe in the impeachment resolution, but because he felt it was better to go slow. At that point, it was no certain that the resolution would get the necessary number of votes and if it were to be defeated, it couldn't be re-filed again within a period of one year.

I can understand Defensor's hesitation, but as God's plan had it, things worked out well. After some time, support in the House began to snowball, encouraging Villar to boldly railroad its transmittal to the Senate.

* * *

One of my advocacies is to help our struggling classical artists. If you want to shake off the post-Edsa Dos problems for a moment, catch the return of Performing Artists International's "Two Sides of a Song" at the Alegria Lounge of the Holiday Inn on UN Avenue this Thursday at 9 p.m. The show features the classic and popular sides of well-known compositions. I saw this show several months ago, and I told artistic director and producer Chola Navarro that she should bring it back, as it was very good but very few saw it due to a storm. Now it's back, featuring New York-based Filipino international pianist Raul Sunico, and top classical singers: soprano Lorna Llames, alto Josephine Roces, tenor Jonathan Badon and baritone Joseph Legaspi. Among the compositions to be featured are Chopin's "Polonaise in AB, op. 53," and its popular version, "Till the End of Time"; Rach Maninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini" and its popular version, "The Story of Three Loves"; and Saint Saen's hit from "Samson and Delilah" and its popular version, "Go Before the Night."

Gloria should talk with women

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WORD is that Cardinal Sin has requested from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that he be allowed to interview the nominees for the post of secretary of the Department of Health. I suppose the point of this request is to check out the nominee's position on issues like reproductive rights, including family planning.

As the first among the country's respected public figures to call for ex-President Estrada's resignation, the Cardinal certainly deserves some consideration and consultation from the new leadership. But if his and the Church's involvement in the "resign" movement was out of a moral imperative, should they then use this early leadership role to win concessions to the detriment of other sectors?

Women surely have as much right to be heard on issues of health and reproductive rights—and consequently on the choice of the health secretary—as the good Cardinal. And if only because it is women's bodies, health and lives that are at stake in this matter, women should have even greater claim to ascendancy.

If the Cardinal and the institutional Church claims the right to be consulted on issues of concern to them, women likewise demand the right to be heard and consulted on government policies that touch intimately on their lives: their and their children's health, public education, nutrition, peace and law and order, opportunities for greater participation in development, among others.

As the country's second woman President, Ms Macapagal should give priority to this dialog with women, equal to the priority she gives the Cardinal's views.

* * *

AMONG her friends, Dinky Soliman, the new social welfare secretary, is known not just for her bright, energetic and warm personality, but also for several personality quirks, traits not usually associated with "G&D" community organizers and development workers.

One of them is Dinky's penchant for organizing events. When her children were much younger, she took time to organize their birthday parties around specific themes, going out of her way to hire clowns, put up décor, and even plan suitable menus. Whenever any of her friends are planning a milestone, they make sure to consult Dinky who will sneak into her crammed schedule time to plan rituals and programs, even insisting on being the "mistress" of ceremonies during the occasion.

Another is an abiding optimism, as symbolized by the sunflower which Dinky has taken for her personal talisman. This may be the reason she managed to smile through many a crisis in the months since the "Erap resign" movement gathered momentum.

* * *

SO friends to whom she sent an e-mail message regarding her appointment to the Macapagal Cabinet were not surprised by the generally positive tone, and why, even if she has, at least for the moment, taken a leave of absence from the NGO community, she was still making her "organizational" hand felt. It was just Dinky, being herself.

Let me share with you some thoughts from our new DSWD secretary: "Just as Edsa expanded its sacredness and spirit, its inspiration and grace, I am joining government to expand the service I provide to the civil society groups to the larger public. The public service that I will undertake will be informed and guided by the values and principles that I carry with me nurtured by my constant interaction with the people especially the oppressed and marginalized.

"However, it will not be easy since there are constraints and great temptations to take the easy way out...this where my request comes in. I encourage you all to stay strong organizations of civil society; expand the power of the people's organizations to every nook and cranny of the archipelago; exercise the power by exacting accountability from government, from us, from me...as well as collaborate with us in programs that you see are consistent with the vision for change and the values that you uphold within your family, organizations and community. Remind me and my other colleagues from civil society who joined government of our roots and values especially if we begin to show signs of being swallowed by the bureaucracy.

"I hope to continue to be (in touch) electronically...and CODE NGO/KOMPIL2 will organize a monthly soiree/dialogue with those of us who joined government. Please feel free to e-mail to me your suggestions on how we can do a good job and what you expect from public servants. I can share your thoughts with the appropriate people in the Cabinet and our decisions can be influenced by the voices of civil society.

"Thank you for all the prayers and the encouragement. I hope we can link arms to move forward toward a just and equitable society with sustainable prosperity for all.

"Sunflower wishes,

"Dinky"

* * *

AMONG the "candidates" being mentioned for Vice President, Sen. Jun Magsaysay strikes me as particularly suitable. He was the first senator to bolt the (former) ruling coalition, in apparent disgust during the Senate blue ribbon committee "juetengate" hearings. Magsaysay was rather low key during the impeachment hearings, but when he did speak out, he was always to the point and pertinent. I think it is this penchant for quiet, painstaking work that will best serve him in the No. 2 post.

Though I understand there was an agreement that those who joined the search committee would not aspire for any government position, the name of Patricia Sto. Tomas, the former chair of the Civil Service Commission, has been floated for labor secretary. I'm sure no one would look askance at Pat Sto. Tomas' possible appointment since she is eminently qualified for the post, having risen through DOLE's ranks. Her integrity is also unassailable.

Women's groups are also backing the appointment of Lucita "Lucy" Lazo as head of Tesda, the vocational and non-traditional training arm of the DOLE. Lazo served with DOLE before joining the ILO office in Bangkok. Upon her return to the country, she concentrated on organizing and training workers in the informal sector, experience that should serve her well in Tesda.

A matter of pride

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

NOW that we've gotten that bit of nuisance out of the way (hopefully), can I go back to where I was before the 11 senators interrupted us so rudely? To be fair, the interruption started when Joseph Estrada was elected president and just went on and on. Now that he's gone back to his lair, perhaps we can have a modicum of normalcy and I can start complaining about the usual things.

It has been apparent for some time to a lot of people that our urban areas are a disgrace: ugly, dirty and smelly and not just because of uncollected garbage. While local officials will excuse the state of disarray and degradation by citing lack of money, no effort is made for instance to compel owners of buildings in major thoroughfares to demolish dilapidated structures. Neither are they requested politely and firmly to paint seedy edifices that evoke failure and neglect. Surely owners of structures on A. Mabini Street or Roxas Boulevard can't be that poverty-stricken?

Not only don't we have tree-lined streets, but when was the last time you saw an honest effort at tree planting in the city? Concrete is the order of the day. Bet your devalued peso the reason is maintenance and forget pollution levels. Plazas disappear with impunity and hell will freeze over before city hall tells you what happened to them. Squatters are driven from canal banks in the morning only to re-appear a battalion strong in the afternoon. To complain of the filth generated by the homeless is to be labeled anti-poor although the real villains are politicians who exploit them for their votes. Despite an eight-year effort, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Program cannot get oil companies to relocate their facilities (What's with this bit about political will, did it get up and go?). Nor can government reclaim the easement along the river that some people to all intents and purposes stole. I wonder whether officials have even tried.

No one takes the anti-littering law seriously simply because no official is serious about enforcing it. Without any pride in his surroundings, why should anyone care?

Ours must be the only presidential palace in the world surrounded by slums, which just about expresses the declining respect toward the presidency. In other countries, people would scramble to live near the presidential residence. Around here, it looks like anyone who had an option left for greener, cleaner and more pleasant surroundings (except a friend of mine who for reasons of her own refuses to move).

No president of this country, with the exception alas of Marcos, understood that the government has to give citizens something to be proud of, landmarks that form part of the country's image. Rizal Park, before it was converted into another piece of tacky real estate, served that purpose, as did the Manila Hotel until Emilio Yap got his hands on it. (Andres Narvasa on Judgment Day has more to answer for than that P600 million-behest loan, not to mention the senators and the GSIS which allowed him to do as he pleases.)

Mayors, on the other hand, have developed the irritating habit of constructing monuments to their taste using public funds. So far, these have been negotiated contracts rather than contests that involve fine arts students and other artists. Anyone who is an elected official gets it into his head that he also has a mandate to inflict his bad taste on the public, and this is one glaring reason why the few remaining public spaces are an embarrassment.

There's Jejomar Binay, of course, with the ubiquitous letter B all over Makati. I mean, the guy really has delusions of grandeur, but the rest aren't far behind. If only one of them would get fixated on trees instead!

There was Alfredo Lim with that P15-million monument to Bonifacio in Mehan Gardens that his successor, who couldn't bomb it, pettily decided to ignore and turn into a garbage dump. Ben Hur Abalos had a cement fixation and constructed an enormous pterodactyl in front of the municipal hall.

Do you think these people ask the opinion of landscape architects not to mention the poor citizens whose money they're wasting? The less said of Ismael Mathay in Quezon City, who allowed Charito Planas to run riot all over the Quezon Memorial Circle , the better.

Local officials wax indignant when people complain that their cities stink like cesspools and then do absolutely nothing about a situation that has gotten worse with every new administration. Signs saying "*Bawal umihi dito*" make sense only if paid public toilets were provided and if vagrants and vendors aren't allowed to take over sidewalks to the detriment of pedestrians. Right now there appears to be no control over mushrooming pedicabs creating road hazards and traffic impediments.

Tell me that someone actually cares for your cities and I expect to see a city with well-lighted, tree-lined streets, sidewalks for pedestrians and parks. But all the evidence here points to neglect, indifference and political expediency.

The thing is that the people who pay taxes simply retreat to gated communities and allow local officials to do as they please. It should dawn on us that we have a stake in our cities and it's time our voices are heard. I mean, who wants to live in a pigsty just because some two-bit politician wants to be reelected?

Dust in the corner

Ivan Picazo

YOUNGBLOOD

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I STARE at the corner of my room, trying to analyze how dust accumulates there in only a matter of hours. The thought that I would again have to wipe it is simply depressing. It was only last night that I did so, losing precious minutes, concerned that sharing the room with that stubborn piece of dirt will slowly give me asthma.

The superficiality of the dust in the corner has never really been an issue. I have never focused my whole attention on it like I do now. But for some reasons, I have to do it.

It's 10 in the morning and I am in my boarding house. The "no" vote of the Senate last night, Jan. 16, during the impeachment trial had lighted a match and spilled oil among the people, and the fire that was in their hearts led them to Edsa. While they are there, taking a stand and fulfilling their duty as a Filipino, I am here lying in the comfort of my blue bed and my fluffy pillow. Sometimes, when I glance at the television for the news, I feel that the reports are slowly turning the black of my eyes into tiny strips going in circles as if to hypnotize into joining the parliament of the streets.

I am not there marching because my parents won't let me. My mother even threatened to go to Edsa and drag me out of there right in front of the ralliers if she finds out I was there. She is anti-Erap herself, but she says she is worried about my safety. (An aunt, who learned that I had joined a protest rally a few months ago at the US Embassy, scolded me saying I put my life in danger.)

So now I am here out of danger in my "safe house." I am safe from brutal policemen, just watching TV and giving my comments about some senators who are easy to despise. But how can I join the other Filipinos out there whose views I share. How can I show the President and his senators that I am not being trapped in their web of deceit? How am I going to convey to the "Balato Twins" that I am disgusted with their mere presence on the TV screen? How can I tell Robert Jaworski and Ramon Revilla that I know they are not really concerned about the welfare of the Filipinos?

I want to march in the streets because I am one with the Filipinos who want to oust Erap. I would like to prove to Ernesto Maceda that his expertise in dirty politics is doing Estrada no good. I would like to shout to Estelito Mendoza that his wit and skills as an *abogado de campanilla* are no match to the truth Joker Arroyo and the other prosecutors hold. I would like to tell Sen. Raul Roco and the other "yes" senators that I am cheering for them. I would like to thank them for fighting to arrive at the ultimate goal of the trial: the truth.

But all of these I cannot do. Sure, there are a thousand and one ways of making my protest known. I can always write, as I am doing now. But at this point, is writing enough?

I believe it isn't. I would like to be where the true fight for democracy is taking place—in the streets. I do not believe like John Osmeña that those at Edsa constitute a mob. They are not a mob. They are member of civil society serving as guardians of our democracy.

After writing this, I will again wipe the dust in the corner of my room to keep my mind preoccupied. If its doesn't work, maybe I will go to Edsa.

Ivan Picazo, 16, is a grade 9 student at the University of the Philippines Integrated School. At 3 p.m. that day, he got a call from his mother and his aunt telling him to go to Edsa. And he was there every day until Jan. 20.

Call and answer

Kawagi Fernan

WHO went to Edsa in search of greatness?

I did not. The night before, I had watched appalled as the impeachment court fell apart after 11 senators betrayed the national interest for personal, political and material gain. When the prosecution panel walked out and Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. resigned in disgust, I wondered what would come next.

The argument against having Joseph Estrada as president was solid even before his election. Since I had pronounced him guilty long before the impeachment process began, I saw the trial as a mere opportunity to prove that argument in a legal manner.

But that Tuesday, Jan. 16 (no, we should never forget that date) that chance vanished, and we, the people, were failed by our public servants. It was certainly not the first time it happened, but then, all the other earlier instances weren't televised.

I slept that night and dreamt about what tomorrow would bring. I knew what had to be done, but 15 years after an event that I was not even able to witness (and my friends can barely recall) being out of the country at the time, I wondered if Filipinos would rise to the occasion once more.

The next morning I found myself at the Edsa Shrine, part of the growing throng. I learned that late Tuesday night the people had started to gather there even before text messages told them where to go. That means of communication would keep the people coming. If all it took to get a good attendance at mass protest actions was TV coverage, then all our rallies should easily gathered half a million people.

But even without a cell phone, I already heard the call on Tuesday night. My heart and mind both told me to be out in the street as soon as I could, because if the people's voice would not be heard in the halls of Congress, then it would be heard under the open sky.

I guess we all reawakened an emotion that I thought Filipinos felt only in brief, spasmodic moments: outrage. Outrage was what brought so many to the shrine, and they did so spontaneously in a manner no prior announcement could have done. Those with minds to think for themselves knew where to go: to the place dedicated to a previous display of our people's strength, where the masses that Erap was never a part of, stood up and topped a dictator.

I was on Edsa that Wednesday to answer the call. I was with those who had heard the call before, with veterans to whom this was but one of many times, and the thousands of my own generation (the first time in a long time I've had anything in common with my generation) who had ignored the call until it came to a point that there was nothing to lose from answering it.

So I put my fist in the air, and gave my answer: I would abide no more the Eraps' corruption. It was time to stand up and be counted.

Other peoples may have invented mass protest actions, but the Filipinos perfected them. On Friday, when Estrada's civil and military support eroded like the dikes in lahar land after a typhoon, and Sen. Raul Roco announced the deadline for resignation, I shared the general consensus that our work on Edsa was as good as done. On Saturday, after Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took her oath as president, the girl I was standing next to turned to her companion and said, "*Ang galing-galing natin!* (How great we are!)

I thought to myself, "Sister, you don't know the half of it." I did not go to Edsa in search of greatness. But greatness was there, in the form of every person of principle who believed enough to come, to march and to show that in the worst of times, Filipinos will listen to the imperatives of common sense and decency and take care of business.

Kawagi Fernan, 20, is a student of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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RP culture glorifies machismo

LETTERS

WE are writing in response to the report published in your paper last Jan. 20 about Sen. Ramon Revilla's reaction to the alleged P200 million payoff in exchange for his "no" vote in the impeachment hearing. Revilla expressed disgust over the rumor because his "girlfriends and mistresses are asking for all sorts of things."

In our work as a diocesan ministry for women and children in Zamboanga del Sur, we often talk about the problem of patriarchy, the concept of machismo and their effects on women and children. Sometimes participants find it hard to grasp what they actually mean and how they are manifested in the mainstream of Philippine culture. Revilla in his movies and his real life has given us clear example of both patriarchy and machismo in our culture.

For a married man to have a mistress or mistresses is machismo in the case of Revilla. That he has "around 20 women and 81 children, many of whom he could not even recall" shows us how "acceptable" such behavior is in our culture. There is no sense of shame. Rather, it is an acceptable badge of manliness, an accomplishment to envy.

Since Revilla is a senator, it should be asked whether or not he can be considered a model in Philippine society? As he said, "accepting a bribe would cheapen him," but having 20 women and 81 children does not.

We have worked with women who have been mistresses of such men and we know their pain, their shame and their sense of being a nobody in other people's eyes. The man gets the glory and the woman carries the shame, disgrace and isolation.

In our therapy sessions with children who have been born out of marriage and whose fathers have "regular" families, we listen to their painful stories. They have a common tale of non-recognition, of shame, of loss of dignity and of never really being acknowledged. Not having a close relationship with their fathers leaves a very deep wound. Healing does not come easy.

Revilla and his ilk can be assured that their stories are well known and will be used by us in our training and many will, perhaps for the first time, really begin to understand how much Philippine culture glorifies machismo for men and how deeply it scorns their women.—**BREDA A. NOONAN, HCA Pre-School Compound, San Jose District, Pagadian City**

P1 billion in perspective

PINOY Times publisher Eggie Apostol says that the controversial second envelope would have revealed that some P1.2 billion went into the bank account of Jose Velarde between August 1999 and December 2000.

P1 billion (the number 1 followed by nine zeroes) is a staggering sum. Let us make a few calculations to put this amount in perspective. For simplicity's sake, let us focus on an even P1 billion.

If by some stroke of luck we earn P1 million a day, it will take us 1,000 days, or two years, nine months and 10 days, to earn a billion. To amass P3 billion at the same rate, it will take us eight years and four months. (Lucky Velarde himself averaged P2.35 million a day. About P70.6 million was deposited into his account monthly.)

The current poverty threshold has been placed at P6,000 a month, or P200 pesos a day, for a family of four. A person earning this much will have to work for five million days, or 13,888 years, to amass P1 billion.

If a person were to work for 40 years (starting at, say, age 25 and retiring at age 65), he would have to net P25 million a year, or about P2.8 million a month, to accumulate P1 billion.

A hardworking Makati executive receiving P200,000 a month, or P2.4 million a year, would have to work for 5,000 months or 416 years to make his first billion.

Clearly then, accumulating a billion pesos is beyond the capability of 99.9999 percent of our population.

Here are more calculations:

If allocated to education, P1 billion would build 200 schoolhouses (at P5 million each), buy two million books (at P500 pesos each), pay 8,333 teachers for one year (at P10,000 a month) or increase the salaries of 83,333 teachers by P1,000 per month. If Brother Andrew Gonzales were to spend P1 billion, he could buy 700 units of Ford Expedition. .

However, P1 billion is only 38 percent of one-tenth of the back taxes the Bureau of Internal Revenue tried at one time to collect from tycoon Lucio Tan.—**WILLIE SOBRITCHEA, wsobrit @ attglobal.net**

Offensive epithets used at Edsa

FOR anyone who is anti-Erap, I know this is a time for celebration. I know we are all elated and feeling ecstatic. But let me share some thoughts on discrimination amid all the elation after People Power II.

I am speaking as one who was among the thousands in the streets who expressed their disgust and outrage over the blatantly biased 11 pro-Erap senators' suppression of the truth and over how the impeachment trial became a travesty of justice. We all knew Erap should be impeached but it was obvious that the ouster of Erap depended on the power of the masses and that the fight was nowhere else but in the streets.

And it was in the middle of this widespread outrage that I too had to express a different outrage. I am outraged by the use of the terms "*pokpok*" or "*puta*." At Edsa, there were placards and chanting of "*Oreta pokpok*." Anyone can say anything negative about Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta and I will agree, but not with "*pokpok*" or "*puta*." Using such terms perpetuates the stigma that some people still attach to "prostituted women" (the more politically correct term). We must put a stop to using such terms to describe a perfectly abhorrent person. The use of such terms connotes a very negative view of prostituted women and perpetuates the erroneous view that prostituted women are "dirty," "disgusting," "shameful" and plain "bad women."

I have been working for the rights of prostituted women and I know that they are not "bad" or "dirty" women. On the contrary, many were forced into prostitution because they had nowhere else to go. Some were victims of incest/rape, some were trafficked, others did not even get a high school education because of poverty.

Prostituted women live in a world of exploitation, vulnerability, poverty, lack of education and opportunities. One has to know the realities prostituted women face to realize that we should stop stigmatizing and ostracizing them as "bad" or "dirty." Rather, we should nurture them and provide them with counseling, skills, education and the opportunity to live a life that is free from exploitation and vulnerability to violence and abuse.

This brings me to the practice of shouting "Osmeña *bading*" during People Power II. Again, I would not mind the use of any other term to describe Sen. John Osmeña but using "*bading*" ("gay") to describe him perpetuates a negative view of "*badings*."

We must put a stop to discrimination against gays and lesbians. Putting a stop to this derogatory usage is one way of engendering human rights. We must accord respect to everyone regardless of sex, race, class, sexual orientation and ethnicity.—**CLARA RITA A. PADILLA, lawyer, WomenLEAD Foundation Inc., 18 Mapagkawanggawa St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City**

The night Edsa 2 began

I FRAMED my Senate pass dated Jan. 16, 2001 as soon as I got back to Cebu. It's a collector's item no doubt.

Being actually in that courtroom when the 11 traitors voted to suppress the truth was an experience I will never forget. Maan Hontiveros went around the gallery during the break to "request" us to stage a walk-out in case JOE'S COHORTS won the vote. She didn't have to tell us; we were determined to show our disgust before the nation.

At the risk of being arrested, we cheered Senate President Aquilino Pimentel's decision to resign. The well-armed policemen in the gallery could not stop us. It would have been a big mistake arresting hundreds of people applauding.

When the cheering stopped, the jeering began. JOE'S COHORTS could not leave the gallery, because they were going to be mobbed no doubt. One guy in front of me stood up on his chair and yelled invectives at Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta. I didn't get his name, but he should be credited for starting People Power II. Oreta's jig, no doubt, was the catalyst for People Power II!

We have a lot to thank the 11 senators for their no votes. What they did speeded up the departure of the B movie actor from Malacañang. It was a fantastic feeling being able to yell at these traitors to their faces.

By the way, to Dong Puno and Mike Toledo: Zagu is in urgent need of a corporate spokesperson. You guys have a good chance. Good luck!—**GERRY MALIXI, No. 9 Molave cor. Escario Sts. Lahug, Cebu City**

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Things to miss with Erap gone

I AM "saddened" by Erap's downfall for there maybe no more of the following:

1. Erap jokes from the totally humorous to the outrageously corny, which have become part of our daily routine.
2. Atong Ang's "genius" in gambling operations and his ability to make the illegal look legal.
3. Jinggoy's highly publicized but low-quality movies.
4. Lucio Tan's clever maneuvering in evading taxes.
5. The impeachment trial *telenovela* starring the 11 "defensive" senators and which has changed our viewing habits.
6. Explosive exposés on the mistresses and their mansions.
7. Willie Nep's almost perfect impersonation of Erap (I don't think he can or will do Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo).
8. "Kamag-anak(s)," "kumpare(s)" and "kaibigan(s)" in cahoots with corrupt government officials.
9. The return of the Marcoses to power and influence.
10. Media personalities who mislead the people to gain favors from Erap.

On second thought, all of the above cannot overcome my happiness over the recent victory of the Filipino people in ousting an immoral and inept chief executive.—**TEODORICO S. PEREÑA, executive director, Sagisag Pilipinas, 1121-A.J. Nakpil St., Malate, Manila**

Revolutionary humor

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

IN OTHER cultures, we advise the distraught, "Don't worry so much; you'll look back after a few years and laugh at what happened." In the Philippines, we don't need such advice; we laugh our way through the crisis as it unfolds.

Filipino politicians should be grateful. To some extent, our sense of humor provides a safety valve, channeling our collective frustrations and resentment into jokes. Instead of rising up in arms, we giggle, snicker, smile, laugh, guffaw ourselves silly.

This last crisis we did rise up but Pinoy-style, without giving up the laughter. Editorial cartoons mercilessly lampooned Erap and his hacks, while Pinoy Times came up with a special weekly, filled with satire. Cell phones and the Internet expanded the potentials for people-power humor, providing not just a venue for rapid transmission of messages but also a whole new format to challenge Filipino creativity.

The most impressive of this high-tech revolution-by-laughing was the production of "The White Album," a collection of anti-Erap songs. (A sequel, "The Gray Album," was supposed to have followed but I have not seen copies of it.) The songs were a mixture of Christmas carols and pop songs: "Jinggoy Boy" (from "Jingle Bells"); "Jueteng Lord" ("My Sweet Lord"); "Alis Ka Diyan" ("Feliz Navidad"). The favorite, one which has now made it into dance parties, was "Huling-Huli" (from "Wooly Bully"). The song now has two versions, incorporating "gotcha" testimonies from Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Clarissa Ocampo.

"The White Album" has been going around as a CD and cassette through a clandestine distribution network but, in this high-tech age, can also be downloaded as mp3 files. (Go to www.asarproject.com for more details about the group, ASAR meaning Artists for Social Action and Response.)

The anti-Erap albums represented a more sophisticated application of electronic technologies but the bulk of revolutionary humor went around as text messages. The volume was tremendous, so much so that one text joke going around had Erap testifying that he acquired his billions of pesos as commissions from Smart and PLDT, grateful for the extra revenues from millions of Erap jokes being "texted" around.

The text jokes were a mixed lot. There were the "religious" types, my favorite one quipping, in Tagalog, about Jesus having been lucky because he only had one Judas and 11 apostles while the Philippines, oh, pitiful Philippines, has to live with 11 Judases (referring to the pro-Erap senators) and only one Apostol (prosecutor Sergio Apostol).

We tease people we love, so poor Apostol got his share of jokes, mainly for his Bisaya English and its famous confounding of vowels. Sample: Why do women witnesses blush when Apostol handles their testimony? Answer: Because he ends his cross examination with "Madam Witness, I am finished," the "i" in "witness" read as a short "e" and "finished" transformed into an anatomical part. Not content with male anatomy, another text joke has Apostol asking "Madam Wetness" to identify an exhibit labeled KKKKKK.

Filipinos pounced as well on the legal gobbledygook. "Your Honor" and "Madam Witness" began to litter actors' lines on radio and television and eventually spilled over into homes, schools and offices. Predictably, the honorifics quickly mutated into corny forms like "Your Dishonor" and "Mr. Just Tiis."

The trial antics were a godsend for scriptwriters and comedians. "I object!" (the defense lawyers' favorite line) became a standard, if not overused line for comedy scripts. One TV show, "Ispup" (Spoof) ran its own versions of the trial with a complete cast of impersonators who captured, with great fidelity, the diction, gestures, even facial tics of the senator-judges, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and lawyers on both sides. My favorite was comedian Jon Santos with his impersonation of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, imitating not just her verbal ballistics but the paranoid million-daggers looks.

The full potentials of the electronic media were unleashed mainly for the ribald. One text message claimed the second envelope contained Erap's grades and a picture of John Osmeña in a two-piece bathing suit. A few days after receiving that text message, I got an e-mail that actually attached the photograph, a montage, of course. As a bonus, the sender threw in another photograph showing Erap and Tessie Aquino-Oreta locked in sizzling embrace.

Revolutionary humor took a life of its own, popping up in different media. The e-mailed pin-ups of the "Balato twins" had their counterparts on rally placards. "Texted" jokes came alive as people told and retold them by mouth. One night after Erap's ouster, a friend came up to me at a bar, completely serious, and whispered: "We must demand government to investigate three issues: one, what was in that envelope; two, what happened to Dacer." He paused and then pounded his fist on table, "Finally, they must tell us who Oreta's dancing instructor was."

The cell phones and the Internet haven't been quite as rowdy ever since Erap was ousted but don't be deceived, the text plotters and cybersubversives are biding their time. Macapagal jokes are beginning to circulate now, mainly gentle ribbing about Macapagal's height. I suggest that Macapagal appoint someone to monitor these jokes. They can be as good a barometer of public sentiment as the opinion polls.

* * *

Comments can be sent to miguel@pinoykasi.org

Poor are watching Macapagal

AMID the flurry of appointments and requests by politicians close to the new administration, we in Kadamay, a nationwide alliance of urban poor groups, would like to remind President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that she still has to earn the support of poor people.

Joseph Estrada's downfall does not necessarily mean the transfer of the poor's support to Macapagal. The poor are strongly against Estrada but that must not be construed to mean we are for Macapagal.

Macapagal enjoys only a fragile and critical support among poor people. Yes, we welcome her administration. We know her presidency was born out of People Power II. We are therefore ready to support her, especially on endeavors which would be beneficial to the poor. But she must really work doubly hard to solidify and widen this support.

She may begin by constantly remembering to whom is she beholden. The poor who gathered at Edsa and in various cities nationwide, as well as the poor migrant workers who held protest assemblies outside the country, were all instrumental in catapulting her to power. The poor must be given due credit. We should not be simply sidelined in favor of military and government personalities who showed up at Edsa at the 11th hour.

Estrada betrayed the poor. He remembered us only during the last quarter of his presidency. He needed our warm bodies to project the image of continuing popular mass support. We never gained anything from his visits to our communities. We remain impoverished, uneducated and unsheltered. The poor have already learned that lesson. We only hope Macapagal will not do the same thing.

So far, the wave of *hiling* or requests by *trapos* in the United Opposition is already making a mockery of Macapagal's call for healing. We strongly urge her to first hear the demands of the poor majority rather than the intimations of a handful of *trapos*. She needs to present concrete proposals that would help ease our miseries.

We've already presented to President Macapagal the Poor People's Agenda during her consultations with people's organizations last year. The agenda includes the following: (1) immediately arrest and try Estrada and his cronies for their crimes against the people, (2) confiscate all mansions and other ill-gotten wealth of Estrada and his cronies, (3) significant rollback in oil prices and the scrapping of the oil deregulation law, (4) moratorium on all planned demolition of urban poor communities and the implementation of a genuine housing program, (5) increase in the minimum wage of workers and government employees, (6) free all political prisoners particularly the Moro urban poor accused of the Megamall bombing and (7) render justice to all victims of the July 10 Payatas tragedy.

Macapagal must now show that she is taking the right steps toward the fulfillment of the Poor People's Agenda. We challenge her to show clear proof that she can improve the lives of the poor within her first 100 days in office. Or else we warn that she might suffer the same fate that befell Estrada. Our new President must never forget that the poor are always closely watching her.—**CARMEN DEUNIDA, national president, Kadamay**

The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

Faith keeps quake survivor alive

BHUJ, India—Kusumben Myacha said Monday that with no food or water she lived on hope and faith in her Hindu gods as she lay pinned under a massive chunk of cement for three days.

She was rescued on Sunday, after surviving the longest period that anyone is known to have remained buried since last Friday's devastating earthquake in western India.

But hopes faded Monday of finding any more people alive after three wintry nights. By official count, the earthquake killed 6,181 people in the industrial state of Gujarat, whose chief minister, Keshubhai Patel, predicted the toll could go as high as 20,000.

Clearly overwhelmed by the disaster, the government said Sunday it would ask for a $1.5-billion loan from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for reconstruction work.

The United States on Sunday announced it would donate $5 million to the rescue efforts. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was scheduled to visit the quake-hit sites later Monday.

Officials said 18 districts in the state were hit by the 7.9 magnitude quake, flattening dozens of cities, towns and villages including Bhuj, which was closest to the epicenter.

Virtually every building in this town of 150,000 people has either collapsed or cracked. Rescue workers, led by thousands of soldiers, are hampered by a lack of equipment such as cranes and bulldozers. Many units do not even have generators, making night rescue work impossible in the absence of light.

Soldiers begin work at first light and stop when the sun goes down. Kusumben Myacha was rescued Sunday evening, just as light began to fade, from an uneven mountain of concrete and bricks that was once the 40-story apartment Gokul Towers.

She wasn't even the one that rescuers were looking for, having been led by relatives of her neighbor, Meeraben.

"Can you hear me? Meeraben, are you there?" called an Army rescue worker, bending low into a 20-cm opening in the debris of the building that was once seven stories high.

After a pause, a faint voice responded. It was Ms Myacha's.

After she identified herself, a ripple ran through the crowd.

"Kusumben is alive . . . Kusumben is alive," shouted a young girl pushing through the crowd. With tears running town her cheeks she stood near the rescue team as they worked steadily, pulling the concrete and metal slabs with their bare hands.

Assured one soldier: "Don't worry Kusumben, we're going to get you out.'' And they did.

Lying on a bed in a makeshift army camp-hospital on Monday, Myacha recounted her tale of survival.

She was in the bedroom of her first floor apartment, and her husband was out in the courtyard when the quake struck. Their children were in the living room and were able to flee before the building collapsed. A cement column fell next to her. A slab of concrete on top of it. She was trapped in the narrow space formed by the two pieces of masonry.

"For three days, I lay in that position with nothing to eat or drink,'' she told The Associated Press. "When the quake started I thought I was dead.''

Throughout her ordeal she could hear voices. She screamed, but it was noisy outside and no one heard her. She slipped in and out of tired bouts of sleep. *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 30, 2001
4th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: *Heb 12:1-4*
Gospel: *Mk 5:21-43*

Jesus crossed to the other side of the lake and while he was still on the shore, a large crowd gathered around him. Jairus, an official of the synagogue, came up and seeing Jesus, threw himself at his feet and asked him earnestly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may get well and live."

Jesus went with him and many people followed, pressing from every side. Among the crowd was a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a lot at the hands of many doctors and had spent everything she had, but instead of getting better, she was worse. Since she had heard about Jesus, this woman came up behind him and touched his cloak thinking, "If I just touch his clothing, I shall get well." Her flow of blood dried up at once, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her complaint.

But Jesus was conscious that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples answered, "You see how the people are crowding around you. Why do you ask who touched you?" But he kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, aware of what had happened, came forward trembling and afraid. She knelt before him and told him the whole truth.

Then Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace and be free of this illness."

While Jesus was still speaking, some people arrived from the official's house to inform him, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further?" But Jesus ignored what they said and told the official, "Do not fear, just believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James and John, the brother of James.

When they arrived at the house, Jesus saw a great commotion with people weeping and wailing loudly. Jesus entered and said to them, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep."

They laughed at him. But Jesus sent them outside and went with the child's father and mother and his companions into the room where the child lay. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha kumi!" which means: "Little girl, get up!"

The girl got up at once and began to walk around. (She was twelve years old.) The parents were astonished, greatly astonished. Jesus strictly ordered them not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

Commentary:

The synagogue official with a sick daughter, and the woman with a hemorrhage, were just two of nameless and faceless people who sought to be cured by Jesus with an expectant faith. The moment Jesus touches them, or is touched by them, he begins to get involved with them as particular individuals with names and faces. They cease to be just a part of the crowd. On the one hand, he dismisses the crowd of mourners at Jairus' house and chooses to be in the child's room with just the child's parents. On the other hand, the woman with hemorrhage (even after she gets cured) advances to identify herself as the one who had touched him. While some political movements work for "the masses," for "the poor and oppressed," or for a party or a collectivity, Jesus ministers not to a faceless, abstract crowd but only to real and concrete persons.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (OBLIGATIONS AND CONTRACTS)—Novation—Novation of a contract is never presumed. It has been held that "in the absence of an express agreement, novation takes place only when the old and the new obligations are incompatible on every point." Indeed, the following requisites must be established: (1) there is a previous valid obligation; (2) the parties concerned agree to a new contract: (3) the old contract is extinguished; and (4) there is a valid new contract. The requisites of novation are present in this case. The 1989 Loan Agreement extinguished the obligation obtained under the 1987 credit accommodation. This is evident from its explicit provision to "liquidate" the principal and the interest of the earlier indebtedness. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Panganiban, Third Division, Security Bank and Trust Company, Inc. v. Cuenca, G.R. No. 138544, October 3, 2000]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

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CORRUPTION SCANDALS

10,000 protesters want Wahid to quit

JAKARTA—Police fired tear gas and warning shots as thousands of rock-throwing student demonstrators stormed the gates of Indonesia's parliament Monday in the largest protest against the country's president.

Three students were badly beaten by police as running battles broke out on the lawns of the heavily guarded legislature.

An estimated 10,000 protesters had marched through the streets demanding that President Abdurrahman Wahid quit over two corruption scandals.

Inside the legislature, lawmakers convened in a closed session to hear the results of a long-running investigation into the twin affairs that have bogged down Wahid's 15-month administration.

"Wahid must resign immediately," said student Ijan, who like many Indonesians only goes by one name.

Police said about 1,000 supporters of Wahid had also gathered inside the gates of the parliamentary compound. However, their calls were drowned out by the much larger anti-Wahid demonstration outside.

The size and violence of Monday's rally was reminiscent of protests that led to the ouster of former dictator Suharto in 1998 and his successor B.J. Habibie in 1999.

Speaking to reporters at the presidential palace, Wahid dismissed the significance of the demonstration and laughed off demands that he should step down.

The investigation into the two scandals represent the biggest political challenge to Wahid since he was elected to office in late 1999 after years of authoritarian rule.

Lawmakers have not yet publicly released their findings. However, many say there is sufficient evidence to implicate Wahid in both scandals despite the president's repeated denials of wrongdoing.

It is far from certain, though, whether the parliament will pursue the case and initiate lengthy impeachment proceedings.

The investigation into Wahid comes as his popularity remains low due to his inability to fix fundamental problems besetting the world's fourthmost populous nation. Separatist and sectarian violence has killed thousands in several restive provinces and the economy remains in crisis. Authorities have also failed to catch the masterminds of a series of deadly terrorist bombings. *AP*

INDONESIAN President Abdurrahman Wahid speaks to reporters at the presidential palace in Jakarta, Jan. 29. Wahid said he would not resign despite mounting criticism on his shaky rule. REUTERS

Anti-nuke activist sets self on fire

TAIPEI—An anti-nuclear protester set himself on fire outside of Taiwan's legislature on Monday, waving his arms and rolling on the ground before witnesses extinguished the flames with bottled water.

Before torching himself, the man—dressed in sneakers, a hooded jacket and black pants—gave a protest letter to TV crews that were covering a small anti-nuclear demonstration outside of the legislature.

Chen Shi-chi, a doctor at Taiwan University Hospital, said the man was in stable condition and did not suffer serious burns. But Chen said doctors were concerned that he may have inhaled harmful amounts of smoke.

It was not immediately known how the man set himself on fire or how long he burned.

The man's letter, obtained by ETTV cable news, urged lawmakers not to support the construction of the island's fourth nuclear plant. The letter, written by hand in black ink on white paper, said the plant, one-third complete, would harm future generations "for a thousand years."

The man, who signed the letter with the name Huang Ting-fang, warned that Taiwan would have the same nuclear disasters as those in Japan, the former Soviet Union and the United States.

One anti-nuclear protest leader, Cheng Chien-liu, said the man was not part of his demonstration. *AP*

Ecuador city tense ahead of protests

QUITO—Tensions ran high in the Ecuadoran capital Monday as hundred of Indians, outraged by their plummeting living standards, prepared for what they called a "symbolic takeover" of the capital to protest the government's economic policies.

Antonio Vargas, leader of the powerful Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities, known as Conaie, called for a national indigenous "uprising" to reverse the economic program of President Gustavo Noboa. Last year, Noboa replaced Ecuador's national currency with the US dollar.

"We will no longer talk about mobilizations," Vargas told reporters Sunday. "We will talk about an indigenous and popular uprising on the national level."

Faced with growing discontent, the government issued a warning to protesters.

"Attempts to destabilize institutional order will not be tolerated," said Interior Minister Juan Manrique. "We will use all the means put at our disposal by the law to guarantee national security."

Meanwhile, groups of native Ecuadorans in colorful garb could be seen in various parts of the city as they prepared for Monday's demonstration, which, according to Vargas, was not aimed at "toppling the government."

But the Conaie leader made clear the protesters would remain firm in their demands.

"We will not back down until the government rescinds measure that are starving the Ecuadoran people," he said "We want them to understand that they will not be able to pin our backs against the wall."

Tensions between the government and Indian organizations have been building up since last week, when at least five protesters were injured in clashes with soldiers along the Pan-American Highway. The Indians had been erecting barricades in an attempt to halt traffic.

Last week, markets in Ecuador's largest cities, including Quito, reported shortages of fresh meat, fruits and vegetables after CONAIE members blocked some of the country's main highways. *AFP*

Pope names more new cardinals

VATICAN CITY—Taking many by surprise, Pope John Paul II on Sunday named seven cardinals—including a liberal—only a week after he set a record by announcing 37 new "princes" of the church, expanding the ranks of those who will some day elect his successor.

Smiling broadly as he appeared at the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square for his weekly appointment with the faithful, John Paul gave no explanation for his unprecedented back-to-back announcements of new cardinals, who included a US citizen born in the Ukraine and South Africa's first black cardinal.

All together, 44 new members are being added to the College of Cardinals, bringing to 135 the number of those under 80 and thus eligible to vote for the next Pontiff. Of these electors, John Paul has now named all but 10, nearly all doctrinal conservatives like himself.

One new cardinal, Monsignor Lubomyr Husar, was only appointed three days earlier to lead Greek Catholics in Ukraine as archbishop in Lviv. An American, he left his native Ukraine in 1944 and studied and entered the priesthood in the United States.

Then there are two Germans.

One is liberal Mainz Archbishop Karl Lehmann, who only a year ago stunned the Vatican by saying the Pope would step down if no longer able to lead the Church. Lehmann immediately claimed that the interview was misinterpreted, but the incident, combined with his suggestion the Vatican should rethink its ban on Communion for divorced Catholics, made many observers say he never stood a chance of becoming a cardinal.

"I'm pleased with the recognition of my work as a bishop and also as head of the German bishop's conference," Lehmann said.

Also named from Germany is a staunch conservative, Johannes Deganhardt, archbishop of Paderborn, who was one of the first German bishops to pull out of a program offering certificates certifying that pregnant women had counseling, paving the way for a legal abortion. The Vatican opposes the counseling system.

Others named to be made cardinals in a Feb. 21 ceremony at the Vatican include Julio Terrazas Sandoval, archbishop of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia; and Wilfrid Fox Napier, archbishop of Durban, South Africa, who for years has fought for social justice.

John Paul also revealed the names of two cardinals he made in 1998 but whose identity he had kept secret, "in the heart," as he put it.

One is Marian Jaworski, archbishop in Lviv of Catholics, many of them Polish-origin, who follow the Latin rite. The other is Jahis Pujats, archbishop of Riga, Latvia. *AP*

REUTERS

PLEAS FOR HELP

An Indian girl appeals to rescue workers to help her get out of her destroyed apartment in Bhuj, in the western state of Gujarat, India, Jan. 28. The massive quake, which struck Jan. 26 is estimated to have killed 20,000 and injured many thousands more. ***(See story on Page 9.)***

Heavy security as Thais revote

BANGKOK—Army and police provided heavy security Monday as Thais recast votes in 62 of Thailand's 400 constituencies where cheating marred Jan. 6 general elections.

Police Maj. Gen. Pongsaphat Pongcharoen, the national police spokesperson, said nearly 50,000 police were deployed across 29 provinces where by-elections were being held, mostly in northeastern and northern Thailand. Election officials fear even worse fraud the second time around.

The results, due by Wednesday, could shape the next government coalition led by the populist Thai Rak Thai (Thai Love Thai) party of Thaksin Shinawatra, which convincingly won the initial poll.

Thai Rak Thai struck a chord among voters with promises to forgive farmers' debts and set up funds for every village in the country, still hurting from the Asian financial crisis that struck in 1997.

With the results for 338 constituencies verified, Thai Rak Thai has won 176 seats while its closest rival, the Democrat party of current Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, has 90 seats.

Thai Rak Thai says it hopes to win at least 38 seats out of the 62 where revoting is being held, and will then form a coalition with one or two smaller parties. Thaksin wants a coalition with more than 300 seats to ensure parliamentary stability. *AP*

Police arrest mob of 1,000 militants in Zurich rampage

ZURICH—Battles between riot police firing tear gas and water cannons and anti-globalization demonstrators prevented from reaching the World Economic Forum cost Switzerland hundreds of thousands of dollars—and its image as a picturesque haven of peace.

Police arrested 121 people—mostly Swiss and German—from a mob of 1,000 militants "intent on violence" late Saturday, Esther Maurer, president of the Zurich police department, told a news conference Sunday. She said the level of violence had rarely been seen in the Swiss financial capital.

The protesters were outraged at being kept away from the World Economic Forum meeting in the Alpine resort Davos, 160 km from Zurich, and being the target of the country's biggest security operation since World War II.

Swiss President Moritz Leuenberger defended the police action.

"It wasn't a disproportionate police response, it was disproportionate violence by demonstrators," a visibly annoyed Leuenberger told journalists in Davos on Sunday. He said he was shocked by television images from Zurich.

Two policemen were injured by stones and one soldiers was trampled to the ground and had his weapons stolen, Maurer said. The fact that all police were clad in full riot gear prevented a higher casualty toll, she added.

Hundreds of passengers were trapped in Zurich's main railway station—many of them feeling the effects of tear gas aimed at demonstrators. Prevented from occupying the station and reaching the nearby Bahnhofstrasse, one of the world's most exclusive shopping streets, protesters then went on the rampage in downtown Zurich. They set fire to cars, smashed windows and spray-painted buildings.

Authorities said the damage ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On Sunday, some protesters returned to Zurich for a peaceful gathering to demand the release of the detailed protesters.

Swiss newspapers on Sunday were virtually unanimous in blaming the authorities for their heavy-handed tactics against the protesters.

"Police methods just like a dictatorship," a headline in the tabloid SonntagsBlick said. An editorial said the "police coup" had inflicted more damage on the World Economic Forum and its professed goals of dialogue than demonstrators ever could have. *AP*

Former president's love life enthralls Argentines

BUENOS AIRES—The last time Argentines tuned in this intently to their favorite real-life soap opera, Carlos Menem had tossed his wife out of the presidential palace and dumped her bags on the sidewalk.

Now a new season has opened, filled with passion and thrills.

That Menem is 70 and no longer president hardly seems to matter. He has again nabbed the limelight with talk of marriage to a former Miss Universe half his age.

One of Latin America's most flamboyant and successful leaders during the 1990s, Menem both fascinated and frustrated his countrymen as he blurred the line between the serious (conquering inflation) and the frivolous (fast cars, curvy starlets).

Life out of office left him struggling for oxygen; for some weeks he would chair shadow Cabinet meetings as if nothing had changed, while his supporters blanketed Buenos Aires with posters reading "Menem, Come Back."

Yet nothing has lifted his profile like his very public affair with Chilean TV celeb Cecilia Bolocco.

For weeks, glossy photos of the ex-prez and ex-beauty queen have been splashed across newspapers and magazines, feeding a voracious national appetite for gossip and prompting questions about a possible run for re-election.

The elegant, sideburned son of Syrian immigrants is everywhere: Here's Menem in Gente magazine, strolling around Patagonia in gaucho gear; and there he is in Caras magazine, partying in a black mariachi sombrero—and never, it seems, without blonde, brown-eyed Bolocco at his side.

The latest word Friday in Gente was that a wedding is set for June. Menem's office wouldn't confirm or deny it.

"I always love the way he behaves," Bolocco told The Associated Press when the couple visited Las Vegas this month. "He doesn't hide anything. He enjoys life, in spite of the fact that he's had a very hard life."

Menem raced racing cars and tangoed through a two-term presidency that transformed Argentina.

An accomplished diplomat, he reopened ties with Britain after the two countries had gone to war over the Falklands. He reinforced democracy by defusing the destabilizing grievances of the military.

He inherited inflation as high as 200 percent a month, tamed it and brought on years of economic growth. His government calmed the volatile currency by boldly pegging it to the dollar.

Steamy love life

Meanwhile, Menem's steamy love life transfixed Argentina and led to a bitter divorce from his wife, Zulema Yoma, in 1991.

By the time he stepped down in 1999, his charisma had faded in a swirl of corruption scandals that engulfed some of his top aides.

Constitutionally barred from a third consecutive term, Menem was succeeded by Fernando de la Rua, whose somber demeanor seemed to Argentines to be a much-needed break from Menem's flashiness. The new president won office on a pledge to be "boring."

While Menem cavorts through the celebrity pages, De la Rua is having a rotten time. Trade unions have fomented big strikes over his efforts to restart the slackened economy, and his vice president's resignation set off months of political crisis. He ended his first year having to turn to the International Monetary Fund for a multimillion-dollar bailout.

Mariano Grondona, a political analyst, says that for the public, Menem's love life is a welcome distraction from economic news.

"When Menem came to power in 1989, Argentina was depressed, grappling with hyperinflation," Grondona told Gente magazine. "But his good vibes triumphed."

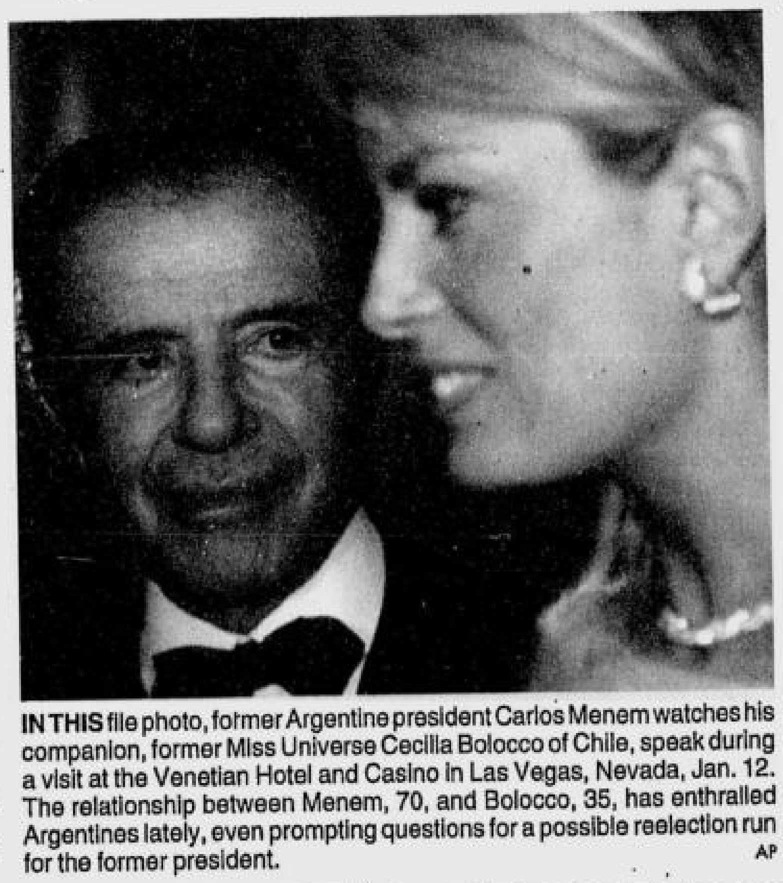
Recession returned in 1998, and Argentines wanted a change, but "now the apathy has returned, and the good feeling of Menem in love has a therapeutic effect," he said.

Menem and the 35-year-old Bolocco have talked of marriage and kids, and polls indicate the relationship has paid political dividends. Menem's approval ratings edged up to 21 percent from 15 percent recently, according to polltaker Ricardo Rouvier, compared with 29 percent for De la Rua.

"I've had time to reinvigorate my personal life, which is now as lively and vigorous as you've always known me to be," Menem wrote recently in the daily La Nacion.

He remains leader of the Peronist Party, the Constitution allows him to run for president again in 2003, and he hinted in the article that he's ready and willing:

"Wherever the country wants, wherever the party indicates, wherever the people call on me, I'll be there," he wrote. *AP*



IN THIS file photo, former Argentine president Carlos Menem watches his companion, former Miss Universe Cecilia Bolocco of Chile, speak during a visit at the Venetian Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, Jan. 12. The relationship between Menem, 70, and Bolocco, 35, has enthralled Argentines lately, even prompting questions for a possible reelection run for the former president. AP

Osmeña vs Osmeña in Senate race

BY NAGIEL B. BAÑACIA
PDI Visayas Bureau

OSMEÑA, S.

OSMEÑA, E.

CEBU CITY—The May senatorial elections will be a face-off between two warring cousins from the influential Osmeña clan of Cebu.

Former Cebu Gov. Emilio "Lito" Osmeña yesterday announced his plans to run for senator after he failed to reconcile with his cousin, incumbent Sen. Sergio "Serge" Osmeña III.

He said he would run under the administration party coalition Edsa Forces as an official nominee of the Probinsya Muna Development Initiatives (Promdi), which he chairs.

The entry of Lito has diminished the chances of Serge to be included in the senatorial line up of the administration party.

Serge was expecting to be adopted by the Edsa Forces because he was one of the 10 senators who voted to open an envelope containing a P3.3 billion "Jose Velarde" account that allegedly belongs to ousted President Estrada.

He was also among those who sought Estrada's resignation after the ousted President got entangled with the "Juetengate" scandal.

Despite his cousin's announcement, Serge appeared to be undaunted and even welcomed Lito's decision to run because it could serve as a venue for the issues concerning their quarrel.

"Let the Filipino people decide (on) which is the better Osmeña. I mean, I'm the incumbent so I am at the advantage," the senator said.

Serge said he does not mind not being included in the Edsa Forces line-up because he will take his oath as a new member of the PDP-Laban of Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

He said he already has an existing network that would run his campaign.

"I'm not afraid of losing. What I don't want to do is sacrifice my principles," he said. "I'd rather risk my life and political (career), as I did during (the) Marcos years in Fort Bonifacio, rather than sacrifice my principles."

Lito said he was supposed to run for senator in the 1995 elections under the Lakas-NUCD. But, he added, he gave his slot to Serge who later won.

"It is now my turn," he told a press conference.

But Lito admitted that he felt bad at Serge for running as vice president to Alfredo Lim when his cousin knew he was running for President.

"The only logic I could think (of at that time was) that he (Serge) is blocking my presidential bid," Lito said.

But Serge explained he could not refuse former President Aquino who asked him to be Lim's running mate because she thought Lito would later withdraw his presidential bid.

"Is it my fault that he (Lito) did not withdraw?" said Serge.

Former Mayor Tomas Osmeña, Serge's younger brother and Lito's ally, admitted that the Osmeña clan failed to reconcile the differences of the two scions.

Tomas, who served as the campaign manager of Promdi during the 1998 elections, said he would not take sides in this conflict.

"The best thing I can do is not to make any contribution to the conflict. I maintain a hands-off policy. Anyway, I'll campaign for both of them," Tomas said.

Though Serge is an incumbent senator, Lito said he has an advantage over his cousin because he is with the administration line-up.

Besides, Lito said Promdi has an existing political machinery throughout the country.

Lito said he would not use Osmeña in the campaign because the votes would be counted in favor of Serge, by virtue of his being the incumbent senator, if voters would just write the family names of senatorial candidates in their ballots.

"I will just use Lito O. or Mr. Promdi in my campaign," he said.

But Serge said the entry of Lito is a plus factor because any vote for an Osmeña would automatically go to him.

"One way or another Lito will be campaign(ing) for me," the senator said.

Retardate accuses CHR investigator of rape

LUCENA CITY—A mental retardate, who went to the Commission on Human Rights to seek justice, has filed charges against a CHR investigator who allegedly raped her on three different occasions.

Suspect Gerardo Sioco, assigned at the CHR regional office IV in San Pablo City, is now the subject of a manhunt by law enforcement agencies.

Judge Abelio Marte of Branch 54, Regional Trial Court here, issued a warrant for his arrest on Jan. 17.

Marte recommended no bail for the temporary liberty of the accused.

The 16-year-old victim, a resident of Barangay Lacawan, Tayabas, Quezon, possesses a mental age of a five-year and three-month old person, as revealed by her medical certificate.

Based on the initial investigation conducted by city prosecutor Thelma Bustonera, the suspect met the victim sometime last year.

The girl, accompanied by her mother, showed up at the CHR sub-office in this city to seek help in filing rape charges against one Jeffrey Hondrade of Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

According to a report, the suspect had helped the victim in filing the charges against Honrade.

After attending subsequent court hearings in Laguna, however, the suspect had allegedly brought the victim to a hotel near the public market here and reportedly succeeded in raping her on three different occasions.

The victim told the investigator that "once inside the hotel room, they would first drink beer and when she was already tipsy, it was always up to his 'Kuya Gerry' (to do) what he wanted to do."

And on every occasion, the victim narrated there was always sexual contact between them.

The girl also said the suspect always gave her money during those occasions.

But Sioco, in his counter-affidavit, denied the accusation. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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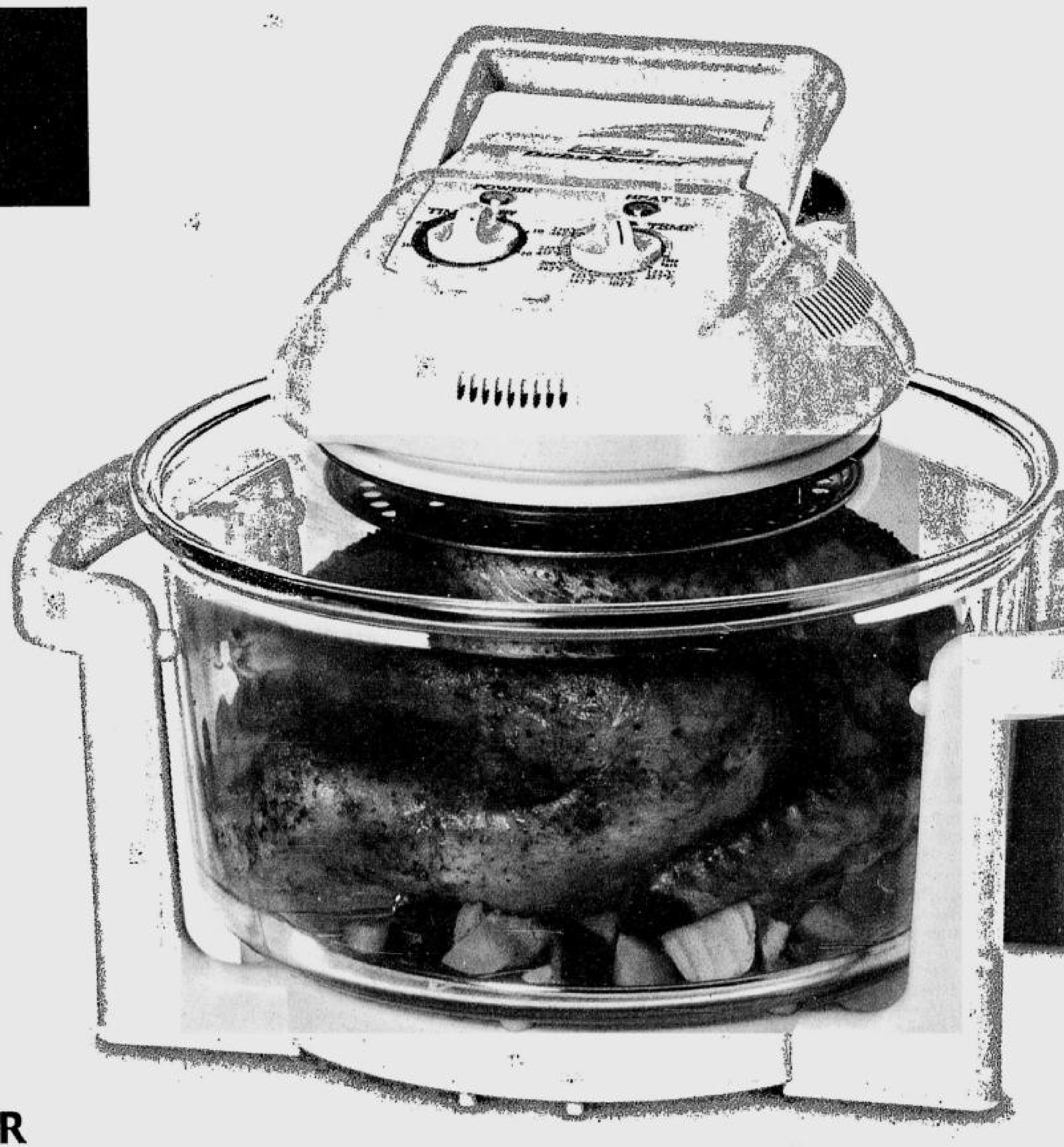

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Politicians not welcome among Clark employees

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Employees of the government-run Clark Development Corp. here asked President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo not to appoint a politician to the top CDC post.

The Association of Concerned CDC Employees (Access), composed of 700 employees, expressed their preference for an "honest, experienced, efficient technocrat" on the heels of persistent reports that politicians from Pampanga were being considered for the top CDC post.

While Access did not identify them, some of the politicians reportedly being considered were former Angeles City Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan and former Angeles City Councilor Max Sangil.

"We had our experience and as a Kapampangan, you may have been aware of this," the union said in a letter that their leaders personally delivered to Malacañang on Saturday.

"True, local politicians went to Edsa (People Power II). But (the) CDC is neither a prize to be given nor an award to be bestowed," they said.

"We learned it from our experience when (the) CDC was transformed into a municipal hall, when local politicians down to the councilors had their heyday in running the affairs of the corporation, totally disregarding proper work ethics and values we have long stood for," Access said.

Without referring to the term of former CDC president Sergio Naguiat Jr., Access said "they almost succeeded if not for our concerted protest actions."

Naguiat, an appointee of ousted President Estrada, was the only politician to have served the CDC presidency. His term, which lasted for only less than five months, was met with protests by unions, livelihood cooperatives and business groups.

With a politician at the CDC helm, the union admitted it was anxious that "our long struggle for proper corporate values and professionalism could be put in jeopardy."

Access left it to Ms Macapagal whether to retain or not Rogelio Singson, chair of both the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the CDC.

Singson, the union said, has shown that he "can get the job done."

Many union members said they preferred former CDC president Rufo Colayco, one of the witnesses in Estrada's impeachment trial, to be appointed to the top CDC post.

Access, nevertheless, asked Ms Macapagal to exercise utmost transparency and good judgment should she decide to appoint a new CDC president.

"We learned the hard way that local politics has no place in CDC," it said.

The vision and tasks that Republic Act 7227 or the 1992 bases conversion law set are "simply overwhelming vis-à-vis the concerns and interests of local politics," the union said.

The Clark Investors and Locators Association also preferred a non-politician to lead the CDC. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

NEW LAKAS POLICY

De Venecia: No to 'balimbings'

DAGUPAN CITY—Former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lakas-NUCD national chair, said the party would institute political reforms to avoid turncoatism in its ranks.

"Once you join the Lakas party, you will be a Lakas member forever," De Venecia warned politicians aspiring to join the new ruling party.

Lakas assumed the role of an administration party after People Power II ousted President Estrada and catapulted Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a Lakas member, to the presidency on Jan. 20.

Ms Macapagal was expected to run for the Senate in 1992 under the banner of her father's party, the Liberal Party. But she chose to join the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) that was the dominant party in the Senate during the early days of the Ramos administration.

After the LDP, she moved to the Lakas-NUCD, the party that was formed to serve as a vehicle for the presidential bid of Ramos and under which she ran for Vice President in 1998.

De Venecia said once an elective official decides to join the Lakas, he or she will sign a contract that he or she will not bolt the party even if it loses in the elections and becomes a minority party.

He said he wanted this political reform introduced in the party to stop the *balimbing* mentality among politicians who change party affiliations at whim.

"If the official decides to bolt Lakas, he or she will have to give up his or her elective position," he said.

De Venecia said this party rule also seeks to reduce corruption in the country.

Because of the *balimbing* mentality, Lakas is having a hard time choosing its candidates to fill up 17,500 elective positions for the May 14 elections, he said.

"Most of these politicians were former Lakas members who joined the Lapian ng Masang Pilipino and now want to rejoin Lakas," De Venecia told reporters here.

He said the former Lakas members were still welcome "on a case-by-case basis" and the applicants would be re-screened.

"Congressmen who signed the impeachment articles against Estrada, who voted for new Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and those who stood by us at Edsa," are qualified to join the Lakas, he said.

De Venecia announced earlier that he was making another bid to become Speaker again.

In order to do so, De Venecia said he asked Rep. Benjamin Lim, who is currently holding the House seat that De Venecia used to occupy, to give way in the May 14 elections.

De Venecia said he asked Lim to run for mayor instead.

It was under De Venecia's tenure at the House that the so-called "Rainbow Coalition" was formed.

It was composed of various political parties that were bound then by their promise to support the programs of then President Fidel Ramos, who won the 1992 presidential race by the slimmest margin ever in Philippine political history.

De Venecia's efforts to form the Rainbow Coalition then was seen as a move to consolidate political power for Ramos in the wake of his being elected as a minority President. *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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CONQUERING MUSLIMS

Young Muslims come out in the open in Marawi City to declare their support for the new administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and demand that she finally recognize the Muslims' need for justice and peace.

Ex-NPAs open to talks with new President

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPM-P) expressed willingness to continue peace talks with the government under the Macapagal administration, according to a leader of the armed group.

Carapali Lualhati, Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) national commander, said it was up to the Macapagal administration to recognize the peace agreement signed by a government peace panel last year.

He said the agreement was made not with ousted President Estrada but with the Philippine government.

Former Executive Secretary Eduardo Angara, as head of the government panel, signed a peace agreement on Dec. 10, 2000 with the RPM-P/RPA-ABB panel headed by Nilo de la Cruz in Don Salvador Benedicto town, about 47 kilometers northwest of this city.

The agreement calls for the release of 200 political prisoners and also the release of P500 million in development funds for livelihood projects that would be identified by the rebel group.

Lualhati said they want the Macapagal administration to honor these provisions, including one that would lead to the dropping of charges against leaders of the breakaway movement and the granting of special permits to carry firearms to 100 guerrillas.

ROUNDUP

Basilan governor to quit politics

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar said he was not interested in seeking an elective post in the May 14 elections. Akbar earlier announced his plan to run for a congressional seat in Basilan. This plan, however, changed after President Estrada was ousted. "I know and I'm very optimistic that I'm still going to win in this election but it will be futile because I cannot lobby for more support for the province," Akbar said. Akbar said lobbying for support from the administration of President Gloria Macagapal-Arroyo will be very difficult, "because I'm very much identified with President Estrada."

Julie Alipala-Inot, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 bombs rock church in Tawi-tawi

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Two bombs exploded outside a Catholic church in Barangay Lower Pag-asa in Bongao, Tawi-tawi Wednesday last week. No one was reported hurt as the explosions happened at 1 a.m. Col. Hilario Atendido, Southern Command spokesperson, said the cathedral's wall suffered damage. He said they are still determining the type of explosives used by the suspects. *Jonathan F. Ma, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Only 15 get gun ban exemption

DAVAO CITY—The Commission on Elections (Comelec) here said only 15 persons in Southern Mindanao have been granted exemptions from the ban on carrying guns during the election period. The Comelec said it imposed stringent measures in screening applicants for exemptions. Lawyer Lirio Joquiño, Comelec regional director here, warned that anybody, including politicians and their bodyguards, who would carry firearms without licenses and authorization from the Comelec committee on firearms and security would be arrested. Joquiño declined to identify the 15 persons who were exempted from the Jan. 3 to June 13 firearms ban for security reasons. But she said most of the officials who were granted exemptions hold sensitive positions in the government and that only two are politicians. Joquiño said nationwide, the Comelec firearms and security committee approved only about 420 applications for exemption. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Dead Quezon reporters honored

LUCENA CITY—Quezon media practitioners recently gave recognition to the public service efforts of dead media men here in rites attended by the dead media men's families. Given posthumous awards were Billy Regasa, Eddie de Leon, Fike Atienza, Isaac Hall, Totoy Constantino, Beloy Juntereal, Joey Lardizabal and Jess de los Reyes of dzLT, the pioneer radio station in this city; city public information officer Felimon Santua; Ike Lingan and Andy Libranda of dzEL; Jose Nav Atienza of the Philippine News Service; Romy Carmona of dwTI; Amadeo Macale of the Quezon Reporter; Mar Babierra of Ang Tanod; Ven Zoleta of the Quezon Times and Vic Mopera of dzJO-Infanta.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Lakas protests re-entry of 'Erap backer'

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo's party mates in Western Visayas are protesting the reappointment of a presidential assistant who was criticized for being "notoriously active" in the administration of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The Lakas-NUCD Iloilo chapter said in a resolution it passed on Friday that they were "strongly expressing disgust" over the reappointment of Rene Villa as presidential assistant for Western Visayas.

"His appointment is seriously shrouded with highly suspicious circumstances, the same being done within 48 hours from (the) assumption (to office) of the newly installed President (amid) the need to immediately address more important national concerns," read the resolution.

Party leaders in the city led by Mayor Mansueto Malabor signed the resolution.

"It is beyond reason and logic how the so-called selection process became so shallow that (the) appointing power had to contend with the same person who was openly and vigorously supportive of the deposed and discarded administration," said the resolution.

The Lakas leaders said Villa, who was re-appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 25, had been a "vigorous" supporter of Estrada even before he became President and had been "hiding in oblivion" since the ousted President was linked to *jueteng* and tobacco tax payoffs.

Villa told the INQUIRER on Saturday that he sees an "unseen hand" behind the protest but declined to elaborate.

"The signatories are actually my friends and I cannot see any reason why they should protest my reappointment. In fact, they never said anything bad about my person," Villa said.

"I suspect these are political moves and the reaction is normal," said Villa who will be taking his oath of office in Malacañang today.

Villa said he served the Estrada administration faithfully because that was expected of him. But when Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson came out and revealed Estrada's *jueteng* links, Villa said he "saw the light" and resigned on Nov. 7.

Ilonggos unite to back Drilon for VP

By Hazel P. Villa
Raj Padilla
and Gerry T. Pagharion
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz and Guimaras on Panay Island have endorsed fellow Ilonggo, Sen. Franklin Drilon, to be the country's next vice president.

The Iloilo City Council and the Aklan provincial government already came out with a resolution declaring their support for Drilon.

The Capiz provincial board was expected to pass a similar resolution.

Zoe Herrera, the board secretary, said the passing of the resolution was already agreed upon by Capiz officials like former Capiz Rep. Mar Roxas of the first district, Gov. Vicente Bermejo and Mayor Antonio del Rosario.

The Antique provincial board was also expected to pass a similar resolution, said Antique Vice Gov. Damian Marfil in a telephone interview.

The Aklan provincial government was the first to come up with a resolution in support of Drilon during an "informal meeting" on Jan. 24 at the session hall attended by Gov. Florencio Miraflores, Vice Gov. Jean Rodriguez, Rep. Allen Quimpo, 17 town mayors and 11 provincial board members.

Also in the meeting were Sangguniang Kabataan president Gerick Templonuevo, Association of Barangay Captains president Josefino Eleserio and Councilor Zosimo Inserto, Philippine Councilors League president.

Of the 17 mayors, only Mayor Emundo Peralta of New Washington did not sign the resolution. Board member Estrella Briones was unable to sign because she was in the United States.

The Aklan resolution was submitted to Ms Macapagal last week. It said Drilon's "proven morality, patriotism and capability" can help President Macapagal-Arroyo face "the great challenge of healing the nation after the cathartic Edsa 2, reviving the economy, and instituting the much-needed social, moral and political reforms."

The resolution also said Drilon should be recognized as "one of the first national leaders who called for the resignation of former President Estrada."

It said Drilon resigned from the Lapian ng Masang Pilipino and this cost him the Senate presidency.

The Iloilo City Council passed a resolution pushing for Drilon as vice president during their regular session on Wednesday.

The resolution was passed shortly after the League of Municipalities-Iloilo chapter passed a similar resolution.

Mayor Frankie Locsin, who chairs the league, said all the 29 mayors present in their meeting signed the resolution. The league has a total membership of 42 mayors.

Iloilo Gov. Arthur Defensor also threw his support to Drilon.

Defensor, a member of the Lakas-NUCD national directorate, said this is an opportunity for all Ilonggos to unite.

"It has been a long time that Iloilo has not occupied the vice presidency," he said.

The late Fernando "Nanding" Lopez was the only Ilonggo Vice President. He served under President Ferdinand Marcos.

In a statement sent by the office of Drilon, five Muslim groups were quoted as saying they, too, endorse Drilon to become Vice President.

The statement identified the groups as the Islamic Directorate of the Philippines, Kutawato Cultural Foundation, United Sheiks of the Philippines, Al Azra Muslim Foundation and H. Ali Disomangcop Islamic Foundation.

Guingona . . .

(From page A1)

Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who told reporters that he wished the other well.

Both men said the rivalry had not strained their relationship.

"No, there's no problem (between) me and Tito Guingona," Pimentel said, referring to reports that he and the minority leader had quarreled over a Senate resolution expressing "recognition and support" for Ms Macapagal.

"There's no word war at all," said Guingona, the perceived shoo-in for the vice presidency by virtue of his being at the forefront of the campaign to remove Joseph Estrada from power.

He is also president of Lakas, to which the President belongs.

Senators were seen shaking Guingona's hand before the session started yesterday. But he was quick to say that Ms Macapagal had "not offered (the post) to me yet."

Asked if he felt that he had the advantage, he said: "No, no, no, no. There are many factors here because the victory of Edsa II has many fathers."

Ms Macapagal asked Pimentel to join her on a visit Saturday to Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan, her first out-of-town trip as President.

Pimentel told reporters he was grateful for the invitation.

Asked if he was confident of being chosen, he said: "I am not confident of anything. I will do what I can to help her administration, probably unify the country and especially lay down the basis for a just and lasting peace in Mindanao."

The word in the Senate is that Guingona will be named vice president and Pimentel will keep the Senate presidency.

Pimentel, a member of PDP-Laban and Estrada's *compadre*, was elected Senate president as a member of the then ruling coalition, Lapian ng Masang Pilipino.

He was one of the 10 senators who voted to open the envelope containing evidence on Estrada's alleged P3.3-billion account. Right after the voting, he said he would resign as Senate president as soon as his replacement was chosen.

Still another contender, Sen. Franklin Drilon, laughed at the media's description of him as the dark horse in the race.

"I accept the 'dark' but not the 'horse,'" he joked.

Sources said Drilon would lead the administration's ticket for the Senate, and if reelected, would likely retake the Senate presidency.

Five Muslim groups, five Eastern Visayas governors and two city mayors have joined others endorsing Drilon for the vice presidency.

The local officials said Drilon was "a brilliant legal mind and a proven leader," and would be Ms Macapagal's "perfect partner in leading our country to a brighter future."

In La Union, at least 20 officers and members of various nongovernment organizations, as well as student leaders, have asked Ms Macapagal to name Pimentel as her vice president.

They said his "high moral values, exceptionally simple life and principles are the epitome of the spirit of Edsa I and Edsa II."

In Cotabato City, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front through Prof. Moner Bajunaid, a member of the disbanded MILF committee on the peace process, yesterday denied that it had issued a press statement endorsing Pimentel.

On Friday, the INQUIRER reported that Salamat Hashim had issued a statement saying that if he were to choose from among the contenders, he would pick Pimentel "because he is from Mindanao."

The statement was handed to the INQUIRER by Salamat's cousin, Bai Monera Pendatun, who, Bajunaid said, was not a member of the MILF.

Bajunaid said the MILF wanted "to make it clear that it does not want to intervene in the selection of the vice president."

"The MILF takes no position on the issue. It is neutral on the issue," he added.

Neither is Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin recommending anyone for the post, according to his spokesperson, Msgr. Soc Villegas.

"He is not endorsing any candidate, but if he sees that people who have a history of corruption are being appointed, then he will raise the point. He is not recommending anybody," Villegas told the INQUIRER.

Villegas' statement ran counter to reports that Sin was backing Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. as the next vice president.

The reports surfaced when only Magsaysay from among the contenders for the vice presidency attended Sin's thanksgiving Mass for Ms Macapagal last week at the Manila Cathedral.

A highly placed source told the INQUIRER that the archdiocese had actually invited all 22 senators to the Mass that was concelebrated by Sin, Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Executive Secretary Renato De Villa yesterday expressed hope that the President's Cabinet would be completed by this week.

De Villa, however, was uncertain whether the vice president would be named by this week as well. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora and Christine Avendaño in Manila; Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Nico A. Alconaba, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

4 tax-free cars for Maceda exposed

(From page A1)

served at the Washington post for the minimum requirement of two years to avail himself of the privilege.

Besides, diplomats are only allowed to import one vehicle tax-free, Siazon said in the memo.

Curiously, however, Siazon still endorsed Maceda's tax-exemption request for Estrada's approval. "The President's authority is therefore requested in order for the Department of Finance to grant the tax and duty-free entry of (Maceda's) household effects and motor vehicles," Siazon wrote in his memo.

The memo, a copy of which was shown to reporters, indicates that Maceda wanted to bring in a 2000 Mercedes Benz S-500 and a 2000 Toyota SUV. Car dealers say the Benz is worth around P3.9 million while the SUV is priced at P2.6 million.

Two of Maceda's assistants at the Philippine Embassy in Washington at the same time also asked the DFA to waive the taxes on two BMWs priced at some P3 million each.

DFA insiders, however, said Maceda could have used his two assistants' names to bring in the two "Beamers" duty-free.

Also ineligible

Rolleo Ignacio, Maceda's senior foreign affairs adviser, and Patricia Porras, foreign affairs adviser, each wanted to bring in a 2001 BMW BX5.

Siazon said the two advisers were also ineligible for the duty-free importation privilege since they had been in Washington less than two years.

The source did not know if Estrada had approved Maceda's request. But even if he had, the former President would only have been able to waive the two-year requirement, and Maceda would have been authorized to bring in only one vehicle duty-free, according to the source.

Maceda will likely not follow through with his supposed plan of importing the four cars tax-free because Estrada has lost the presidency, DFA insiders said.

130 percent

Customs authorities impose a 130-percent import tax on Mercedes Benzes. Import taxes on BMWs and Toyota SUVs vary depending on the model and its accessories, but are not lower than 50 percent of the car's price.

Based on conservative estimates, Maceda and his two assistants would have had to pay at least P9.3 million in import duties.

Siazon coursed his Dec. 7 memo to Estrada through former Palace aide Ramon Cardenas, then deputy executive secretary and head of the Presidential Management Staff.

In his memo, Siazon pointed out that Section 81 of the Foreign Service Act of 1991 (Republic Act 7157) allowed only for the tax and duty-free entry of only one vehicle per diplomat. Section 38 requires a foreign service officer to serve a minimum of two years in a foreign assignment.

Out of job

Maceda became ambassador to Washington on July 19, 1999, but rushed back to Manila last November to help Estrada survive the "Juetengate" crisis.

In December, he took on a more public role as Estrada's spokesperson in the aborted Senate impeachment trial.

Maceda resigned from his post effective Dec. 30 last year. He was back in Washington when Estrada's government collapsed on Jan. 19.

He has not returned to the country since.

Maceda designated Ignacio and Porras as his foreign service advisers when he went to Washington.

Ignacio assumed office on July 19, 1999 and was considered resigned when Maceda gave up his ambassadorship. Porras assumed office on Sept. 6, 1999 and was recalled on Sept. 30, 2000.

Riding in style

(From page A1)

a report he had received on the car.

He did not say who had used the car, and declined to describe the make of the vehicle or the kind of vibrator machine installed.

At the first Cabinet meeting held by President Macapagal-Arroyo last week, officials agreed to formulate a definition of "luxury vehicle" to guide them in the process of recalling such cars, De Villa said.

Public officials should not "use Mercedes Benz, BMW, Expedition and Lexus" brands or models, he told radio station dzBB. "We should use ordinary vehicles—especially government officials, because they should set an example."

"What is important is for the government to set an example in these times when people are struggling to make ends meet and many have no jobs," De Villa said.

"(Amid poverty,) you see government officials riding in luxury vehicles. *Sala sa panahon at sala sa moralidad ng gobyerno 'yan* (It's wrong in these times)," he added.

The executive secretary said the DOT vehicle and other luxury cars issued by ousted President Estrada to government agencies would be recalled and auctioned off to provide the cash-strapped government with much needed revenue.

De Villa said that Malacañang expected to learn by the end of this week the number of luxury vehicles issued by the Estrada administration.

Last week, the new President ordered the recall of the luxury vehicles, and prohibited government agencies from dealing with her relatives "real, pretended or imaginary."

First-time voters can still register

(From page A1)

Roco following a Senate committee on electoral reforms hearing attended by Comelec officials.

Roco said representatives of youth groups were also at the hearing and they asked for the holding of special registration days to enable those who missed the deadline on Dec. 27 last year to register.

First-time voters had complained that the deadline passed without any meaningful information campaign by the Comelec to inform young citizens about the registration period.

"So please spread the word. First-time voters, 25 years old and below, can register at their places of residence on Feb. 17 and 18," Roco said.

The Senate, with 14 votes, approved yesterday the allocation of a P2.4-billion special election budget pending approval of the P725-billion national budget.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. met with President Macapagal-Arroyo and Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo to ask them to defer the endorsement of the national budget to the 12th Congress to enable the Macapagal administration to make adjustments in allocations.

Pimentel noted that the P725-billion budget was an Estrada administration budget and its priorities may have been similar to the new government's.

Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo said yesterday time-pressed legislators have only five session days remaining to deliberate intelligently on the national budget.

Arroyo said the lack of time also means the 11th Congress will have to hold in abeyance the approval of such key proposals as the controversial Omnibus Power Reform Bill and the Bangko Sentral Amendments Act that were expected to spur lengthy debates in the House.

"The 2001 budget was passed by the House but it got stranded in the Senate because of the impeachment trial," Arroyo explained.

"The Senate will not have the time to act on it anymore," he said.

Without a budget, the government will operate on the allocations approved by Congress the year before.

Arroyo added that because of the time constraints faced by Congress, "it can no longer deliberate with thoroughness and wisdom on any bill before it."

Since President Macapagal has expressed her preference that the Power Reform Bill be shelved until the next Congress, Arroyo said congressmen should also defer the approval of the bill amending the BSP Law.

"That's so the unbelievable fraud committed in the banking system that was revealed during the Estrada impeachment trial can be thoroughly discussed and remedied," he said.

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Serapio to testify vs Estrada

(From page A1)

"It is true that we have a new witness, but we are not ready to reveal his identity because firstly, his security is being protected," Perez said, adding that the witness may back off if his name was prematurely disclosed.

Perez said he was also expecting other Estrada cronies to come forward after his ouster, but said they would have to undergo rigid questioning by prosecutors.

"We have to examine the kind of evidence (they may offer). It might be possible that they may also try to point us to another direction to mislead our investigation," he said.

Perez said the justice department should "set a good example" and convict Estrada, despite calls from several sectors to exile him abroad to prevent him from sowing trouble.

Serapio served as the corporate secretary of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation, which Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson claimed received P200 million in "jueteng" protection money in April last year.

Singson said Estrada used the foundation to launder jueteng money.

Estrada admitted that Serapio, his former presidential assistant for political affairs, had received the P200 million. But he said he did not touch the money because it came from illegal gambling.

Yolanda Ricaforte, the alleged auditor for the jueteng payoffs to Estrada, testified before the Senate blue ribbon committee last November that she handed over to Serapio checks totaling P200 million in his law office upon Singson's instructions.

Serapio was the valedictorian of his law class in Ateneo and is senior partner in the De Borja, Medialdea, Belo, Guevarra & Gerodias law firm. His mentors at the Ateneo de Manila University had asked him to apologize for his actions.

Serapio allegedly put up a shell corporation, St. Peter Holdings, to buy the "Boracay" mansion in New Manila, Quezon City, for one of Estrada's mistresses.

Serapio also helped formed Alexie Holdings and Pio Holdings, two other shell corporations that Estrada reportedly used in his attempt to take over the Fontana Casino at the Clark Economic Zone.

The impeachment trial was suspended indefinitely on Jan. 17 after the prosecutors resigned in protest of the Senate vote not to open an envelope containing alleged evidence on Estrada's P3.2-billion account with Equitable PCI Bank.

The impeachment trial has become academic following Estrada's ouster on Jan. 20.

But Estrada can still be prosecuted as he has lost his immunity from suit.

The House prosecution panel has turned over the pieces of evidence it gathered for the impeachment trial to private prosecutors who are pursuing the criminal cases against Estrada.

The private prosecutors said they would pursue the cases against Estrada either through the Office of the Ombudsman or the Department of Justice.

Private groups such as the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption and three lawyers' organizations have filed with the Office of the Ombudsman cases of plunder against Estrada.

The maximum penalty for plunder is death.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said last week that Estrada "stands accused of plunder, graft, malversation of public funds, falsification of public documents, bribery, unexplained wealth and violation of Republic Act 6713, which pertains to the failure to disclose true statements of assets and liabilities."

The hearings would be open to the public if the complainants requested it, according to Desierto.

Newly installed President Macapagal-Arroyo has vowed to pursue the cases against her predecessor.

Legal poser: Can he testify vs ex-president?

CAN a lawyer testify against a client in a criminal case?

The lawyer can, but he could face disbarment.

Under the confidentiality of lawyer-client relationship, a lawyer is barred from testifying against a client.

The same prohibition applies to a husband and wife. One cannot testify against his or her spouse in a court case.

It is similar to the seal of the confessional. A priest cannot reveal somebody's confession. Nor can a doctor divulge in public information about the medical condition of a patient.

The confidentiality of lawyer-client relationship is part of the Rules on Evidence. Its purpose is to encourage a client to talk freely to his lawyer with the assurance that whatever he says to the lawyer will not be disclosed to others.

A lawyer can break the rule only if the client allows it.

Abat agrees Abadia appointment not good

(From page A1)

coddler and there's evidence that he hid the principal suspect, certainly his appointment should be reviewed. The same with General Abadia," Guingona said.

In a hurriedly called press conference yesterday at Camp Crame, Abadia gave reporters copies of a document clearing him of involvement in the pension fund scam.

The clearance was dated Jan. 29, 2001, and was signed by Orlando C. Casimiro, deputy ombudsman for the military.

"Records of this office indicate that you were not among those recommended to be indicted for violation of R.A. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Art) and other cases related to the RSBS fund anomaly, for insufficiency of evidence," the two-paragraph clearance said.

Jurisdiction

Abat denied earlier claims by Abadia that the Office of the Ombudsman had dismissed his case.

"No. The case is still with the Supreme Court, which will decide whether the RSBS is a government or private corporation. The contention is over jurisdiction," he said.

Abat said that regarding Abadia's appointment, "all they can do to correct it is to relieve him for a while, appoint an officer in charge at the National Security Council, and wait for the decision" on the case.

"If Abadia is exonerated, *balik siya* (he can go back to his post)," said Abat, a former defense secretary and a PMA graduate.

Abat said the President should be careful in making appointments to her Cabinet.

But he had kind words for Executive Secretary Renato de Villa, who served as defense secretary of President Fidel Ramos.

"De Villa is good. He is not a *trapo* (traditional politician)," Abat said.

Earlier, Ms Macapagal said De Villa was in charge of choosing Cabinet appointees in the "security loop."

"The search committee doesn't know the security situation and the security community. So I'm relying on Secretary De Villa, and this is the team he is forming," she said in an interview with GMA-7.

Abat is also in favor of the appointment of Maguindanao Rep. Simeon Datumanong as public works secretary.

He described Datumanong as a "nice man."

Personal plane

Abadia said he was prompted to get the clearance because of opposition to his appointment.

"From this point onward, any attempt to link me to the RSBS fund anomaly brings the issue beyond the legal realm and into the personal, political or insidious plane," Abadia said.

It was then Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado who caused the investigation of the pension fund irregularities.

He quit his post Thursday, following Abadia's appointment as national security adviser.

Abadia urged his critics to desist and to allow him to rise to the challenge of the position to which he had been appointed.

"Please spare me from being trapped in the dirty mire of politics so that I can move on to do the duties of my office, and earnestly serve once more my country and my people," he said.

Abadia was AFP chief when he chaired the RSBS.

The Office of the Ombudsman cleared him and other RSBS officials after giving weight to the defense claim that the RSBS was a private fund.

Mercado, however, brought the case to the Supreme Court.

Asked if he had other pending cases, Abadia said he was prepared to get all kinds of clearances even from the Supreme Court just to clear his name.

Ermita

In Davao City, business and church leaders yesterday expressed concern over the appointment of more retired military officers to the Cabinet.

John Gaisano, president of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCCI), said a civilian, and not a retired general like Batangas Rep. Eduardo Ermita, would be a more appropriate defense secretary.

Ms Macapagal named Ermita acting defense chief in the wake of Mercado's resignation.

"If you were a soldier all your life, your thinking and even the way you analyze things is different from that of the civilian," Gaisano said.

He said it was important that the defense department be headed by a civilian familiar with the workings of the military. In this way, he said, the defense secretary could serve as "bridge" between the military and the President.

Robinson Montalba, chair of the Promotion of Church People's Response, said the defense portfolio deserved a civilian with an impeccable record in peace and human rights advocacy, especially in light of the new administration's announcement that it would resume peace talks with Moro and communist rebels.

Montalba also urged Ms Macapagal to review the appointment of some military officers to government posts.

But businessman Jesus Ayala, chair of the Regional Development Council in Southern Mindanao and a supporter of Ms Macapagal, said he was not questioning Ermita's competence to serve as defense chief.

Ayala cited Ermita's experience as a military officer and involvement in the peace process with the Moro National Liberation Front.

But he pointed out that the President should have appointed a civilian familiar with both the workings of the military and the peace process.

Still, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front considers Ermita a "better alternative" to Mercado.

Prof. Moner Bajunaid, a member of the disbanded MILF committee on the peace process, said Ermita served well as a member of the government panel in the peace talks with the MNLF.

On the other hand, he said, Mercado was responsible for the displacement of Moro residents and the destruction of villages in Central Mindanao, being the chief implementor of the all-out-war campaign.

"Good riddance," Bajunaid said.

Gaisano also expressed concern over the appointment of more politicians to the Cabinet. Nevertheless, he said he was willing to give the military officers and politicians in the Cabinet a chance to prove their worth.

Review

Executive Secretary De Villa said the appointments, including his own, were subject to review.

He denied reports that only four appointments went through the search committee formed by the President to handle the selection process.

He said it was the search committee that made a short list of the appointees.

De Villa also said the candidates had to pass a set of criteria including integrity, competence, sensitivity to civil society, acceptability to the public and to the President, and track record. ***With reports from TJ Burgonio and Christine Avendaño in Manila; Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Loi expected to do a Hillary

(From page A1)

members. They urged the ex-president to field his wife who they believed has a good chance of winning.

Though her name had been dragged into the corruption charges against her husband during the impeachment trial, her supporters reportedly told Estrada that she still comes across as the "aggrieved party."

"She could also be a role model of standing by her husband and the source of strength during the family crisis," the Inquirer source added.

Source of strength

In previous interviews, Ms Ejercito said her source of strength came from her daily attendance at holy Mass and from constant praying.

As First Lady, she was well known for her charity work and medical missions to remote areas.

Ms Ejercito is a psychiatrist.

Projects

Among her programs were the 'Serbisyong Pagamutan para sa Mahirap (Medical Service for the Poor), Tubig Pang-kalusugan at Kabuhayan (Water for Health and Livelihood), Batang Lansangan Program (Street Children Program) and the Botika ng Bayan. Ejercito, who had expressed deep admiration for now Sen. Hillary Clinton, has been compared to the senator from the state of New York.

Like the US senator, Ejercito is married to a womanizer.

Like the senator, the former first lady also stood by her husband in the face of relentless attacks from his critics.

One of the more memorable scenes of the Estradas' exit from the Palace was the portrait of a calm and steadfast Dr. Ejercito standing close to her husband.

San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, when asked to confirm the report about his mother's candidacy, told the Inquirer, "Maybe."

Erap ally asks SC to nullify Gloria rule

(From page A1)

full-court session today.

In his 13-page petition, Lozano contended that the Supreme Court action declaring Ms Macapagal as the new President was void because Estrada had not officially resigned.

"He simply left the Palace to avoid bloodshed. Consequently, her (Ms Macapagal's) oath and proclamation as President are null and void and cannot validated by any subsequent act or recognition," he said.

Prayer

"It is respectfully prayed that . . . Madame Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo be declared acting president and President Joseph Ejercito Estrada president on leave in the interest of authentic national reconciliation and public welfare," Lozano added.

The Supreme Court on Jan. 20 declared the presidency vacant. Davide then swore in Ms Macapagal in the presence of 11 other justices of the tribunal, capping a five-day uprising by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators calling for Estrada to resign over corruption charges.

After the military top brass withdrew their support and many Cabinet members resigned, Estrada was forced to leave Malacañang.

Estrada, however, made it a point not to sign a resignation letter. He instead sent Congress a letter saying he was handing power over to Ms Macapagal and referring to her only as "acting President."

To support his plea, Lozano offered as evidence Estrada's letter to Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella.

A group of Estrada supporters also filed a formal request seeking clarification of the issue.

"Leaving the Palace is not the equivalent of resigning," said Dan Natividad, a legal aide who submitted the request on Monday. "We are now supporting an unconstitutional president."

Lozano, who had served as lawyer for the estate of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his heirs, warned a "constitutional crisis" could spark another popular revolt resulting in the ouster of Ms Macapagal.

"Of my personal knowledge, if the constitutional crisis were not resolved at your earliest convenience, Madame (Macapagal) Arroyo may last only from three to six months," he said.

Perez

In his legal opinion written on Jan. 24 but released by Malacañang only yesterday, Perez said Estrada's "intention to relinquish the office is very clear" from his statement to the media on the same day he left the Presidential Residence.

Resignation, to have legal effect, "does not have to be express," Perez stressed.

He cited a case in which the high tribunal ruled that "resignation implies an expression of the incumbent in some form, express or implied, of the intention to surrender, renounce and relinquish the office."

Perez noted that Estrada even acknowledged in his press statement "the fact that Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took her oath as President of the Republic of the Philippines" at noon of Jan. 20.

In his statement, Estrada said that he was leaving Malacañang—even if he had doubts about the legality and constitutionality of Ms Macapagal's proclamation as President—for the sake of peace and in order to begin the healing process.

"The legal effect of the resignation of former President Estrada is not diminished by the fact that he subsequently sent a letter ostensibly dated Jan. 20, 2001 to the Senate President, but received by the Senate President on Jan. 22, 2001," Perez explained.

He described as "obviously an afterthought" Estrada's letter designating Ms Macapagal as "acting President."

The letter to Pimentel read: "By virtue of the provisions of Section 11, Article VII of the Constitution, I am hereby transmitting this declaration that I am unable to exercise the powers and duties of my office. By operation of law and the Constitution, the Vice President shall be acting President."

Perez said Estrada's letter would not have the "legal effect of restoring to him the office that he had already relinquished."

Medical disability

He said the Constitution only contemplated a "medical or temporary disability" as cause for a president's inability to exercise the powers and duties of his office.

"It is obvious that this condition to make Section 11, Article VII apply did not exist then, and does not exist now," Perez said.

"There is no question that Estrada had resigned . . . paving the way for the valid assumption by Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo of the Office of the President under Section 8, Article VII of the 1987 Constitution," he said.

Perez also said People Power II that removed Estrada from office had a constitutional basis. "Sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them," he said, citing Section 1, Article II of the Constitution.

"The people had spoken—the former president must go and be replaced by his constitutional successor. The military and the police supported this decision by withdrawing their support from him, followed by the mass resignation of his Cabinet members. "These factual events, coupled with the recognition by the diplomatic community of the newly installed president and her administration already foreclose all questions regarding the legality and constitutionality of her assumption of the presidency as of 12 noon of Jan. 20, 2001."

On Jan. 22, the Supreme Court issued a minute resolution reaffirming Davide's authority to administer the oath of office on the basis of Ms Macapagal's "urgent request."

The same resolution, however, added that the Supreme Court was prepared to act on any case filed by any party on the issue of the constitutionality of Ms Macapagal's oath taking.

Macapagal warned of Edsa III if…

(From page A1)

as the distribution of spoils of office to political allies, but to create the conditions to make the moral revolution possible, which includes first and foremost throwing all the rascals in jail, and then recasting the bureaucracy to reflect a system based on merit rather than political patronage and creating a much more efficient tax collection system that will at the same time go after the big tax evaders," Lopez said.

"Unless all these things and more are done, Edsa III may not be too far behind Edsa II," he stressed.

Less ominous and more optimistic about the new administration was a former US congressman who played a key role in the first people power uprising in 1986.

President Macapagal would do a "very good job" as the new leader "in this very exciting moment" for the Philippines, enthused former US Rep. Stephen Solarz.

He said that the circumstances under which the President came to power provided her the opportunity to launch a comprehensive and all-out campaign against corruption.

Solarz joined officers of the New York-based First Philippine Fund (FPF) in a closed-door meeting with the President in Malacañang yesterday.

Ms Macapagal was swamped with visitors from the business community all day, both foreign and local, including known allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

FPF president and chief executive director Lilia Clemente told the President that US investment firms were taking a fresh look at investment opportunities in the country, another Malacañang statement said.

Clemente was quoted as saying that Wall Street firms, which used to downgrade or ignore the Philippines, were now encouraged by the promise of Ms Macapagal to implement transparency and level playing field in her administration.

Lesson

Lopez said that the lesson of Edsa II was that the Filipino people, especially the young, were sick and tired of corruption and moral turpitude in government.

The top businessman said the impeachment hearings had confirmed the people's worst fears about shenanigans in high places and impelled them to take a direct hand in effecting change.

"The trial enabled us to see more clearly that morality in government is directly related to our country's economic health," he said.

"Clearly, we have to change if we are to prosper, and it is significant that our new President Arroyo, has recognized Edsa II as primarily a moral revolution. If so, then we have to follow through the logic of that moral revolution," he said.

Lopez agreed that the reason why Edsa II happened was that because Edsa I had failed to achieve its main purpose.

"Edsa I failed because the main culprits were allowed to leave the country and go unpunished, and that no new moral order ensued from Edsa I," he said.

In the case of his family, Lopez noted that the conglomerate had survived even the worst of times during the martial law period, when most of its businesses such as ABS-CBN, Manila Chronicle, Meralco and its holding company, Meralco Securities Corp. (now called First Philippine Holdings Corp.), were either shut down or taken over by the government or the Marcos cronies mainly due to the family's strong opposition to the graft and corruption of the Marcos regime.

Exciting

"I think this is a very exciting moment for the Philippines," said Solarz, who once chaired the subcommittee on Asia and Pacific at the US House of Representatives and is now president of a Washington-based public affairs firm, Solarz Associates.

He serves as board member of several international organizations, one of which is FPF.

The former US congressman played a key role in US congressional efforts to restore democracy in the Philippines during the administration of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Solarz said he knew Ms Macapagal since her days in the Senate, adding the President "is well-equipped to take the reins as head of state in the country," being highly educated and a trained economist.

Other visitors

Clemente and the FPF executives were accompanied to the meeting by Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas II and Paul Dominguez, presidential adviser on regional development.

The two officials were also present in the President's meeting with local and foreign business leaders who expressed support for her administration and confidence that the economy would be revived.

The business leaders were led by Miguel Varela, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Raul Boncan, PCCI vice president; Jimmy Tang, president of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry; John Ng, FCCI first vice president; Serge Ortiz Luis, president of Philexport; Donald Dee, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines; Clause Sudhoff, president of the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines; Soichi Kamayama, president of Japan Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines and Terry Emrick, representing the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

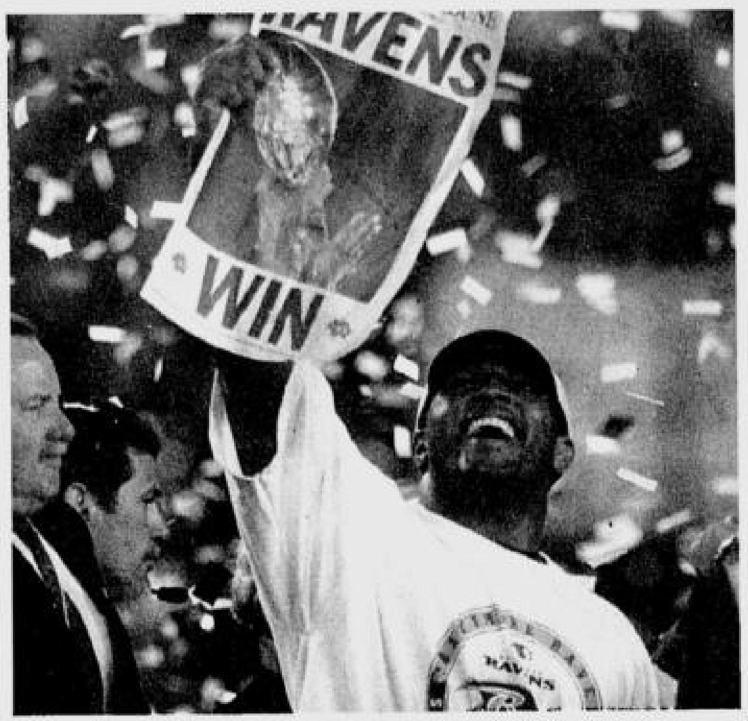
Also present in the meeting were Joji Ilagan-Bian, chair of the Mindanao Business Council, and Robert Montelibano, chair of the Metro Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ms Macapagal also met with Dutch-English investors in the water industry who said they felt "very encouraged" with her assumption into office and the directions taken by her administration.

"With the appointment of the new President and her policy statement about transparency and level playing field, we feel very encouraged about our investment in the Philippines and the success of our ventures," said the executives of Cascal, a Nuon Biwater company based in the United Kingdom and business partners of the Subicwater Co. in Zambales.

They told the President of previous "difficulties" in their investments in the country.

Presidential spokesperson Renato Corona said the President was also scheduled to meet yesterday with George Yang of McDonalds and a small farmers' delegation.


LEWIS holds up a newspaper with the headline saying the Ravens won Super Bowl 2001 over the Giants. Lewis was named MVP. AP

Lewis keys Ravens 34-7 rout of Giants

TAMPA, Florida—As Ray Lewis came out of the tunnel before the Super Bowl began, he followed a season-long ritual: He scooped up a few blades of grass from Raymond James Stadium.

"That's a symbol," Lewis said. "This is our turf."

Lewis led a Baltimore defensive charge that bottled up the New York Giants in a 34-7 rout.

He seemed to be everywhere—stuffing running plays, helping the secondary, deflecting a couple of passes, including one that turned into an interception, and making five tackles. He was a constant presence on defense, one New York was never able to avoid. It earned him the MVP award.

The Ravens' defense established itself early. Lewis recalled the sequence of New York possessions that told him this would be Baltimore's game.

"Three and out. Three and out. Three and out. You got problems the rest of the day," he said.

Indeed they did. The Giants managed only 86 yards passing and 66 running. They had 11 first downs, but three of those were by penalties. It was a total shutdown—an exclamation point, Lewis said—evidence that this defense is the best ever.

But, he said, it's not as good as it can be.

"You can always play better," he said. "Anytime we step on the field, we can always improve. You're going to be hit for 60 minutes when you play us. We're going to have fun and smile."

Lewis, the Defensive Player of the Year, glowed as he talked about the game.

"I'm 25 and I'm a world champion," he said. "There is no feeling like this. My body is tingling. We're world champions, anyway you look at it.

"If you can't put us down as the greatest defense in history now, we'll never be. We dominated everybody we played."

Lewis said the Ravens' defense took the fire out of the Giants. *AP*

Ray celebrates triumph

TAMPA, Florida—Ray Lewis was fleeing from a murder scene after last year's Super Bowl. This January, the Baltimore Ravens linebacker was celebrating one of the most amazing reversals of fortune in sports history.

Lewis, who spent 15 days of "hell" in an Atlanta jail before murder charges were dropped, was voted Most Valuable Player of the Super Bowl here Sunday for leading the Ravens past the New York Giants 34-7.

"To be here after what happened last year, it's a feeling you can't describe," Lewis said.

"It's a beautiful thing. You can't describe it until you sit down and examine yourself and understand. Wow. You don't write books that good. But it's life. This is the greatest it can possibly be. Nothing can top this."

Winning the Super Bowl MVP award capped an amazing season for Lewis that included National Football League Defensive Player of the Year honors. He led the Ravens in tackles for the fith year in a row with a career-best 187. *AP*

Ritualo, 3 others vying for best player award

GAMES TODAY *(Makati Coliseum)*
3:30 p.m.—Shark vs Hapee
5:30 p.m.—Blu vs Welcoat

BY DENNIS EROA

TOO close too call.

In the tightest race ever for the PBL Challenge Cup MVP plum, four cagers—Welcoat's Ren Ren Ritualo, Shark Energy's Chester Tolomia and Roger Yap and Marlon Legaspi of Blu Sun Power—remain in hot pursuit for the top honor.

The race is so exciting that today's twinbill marking the end of the single-round robin semifinals may decide the MVP statistical leader.

Shark (12-2) battles Hapee Toothpaste in the 3:30 p.m. curtain-raiser, while Welcoat (10-4) collides with Blu Sun Power at 5:30 p.m.

PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad said the basis for MVP selection is "75 percent statistics and 25 percent votes."

A cinch for the rookie of the year award, Legaspi regained the lead with 411 statistical points, while Ritualo and Tolomia are in joint second with 410 points.

Yap, the Chairman's Cup MVP, is in fourth with 408 points.

In fifth place is Ateneo-Pioneer's Enrico Villanueva (393 points).

Knicks, 76ers trip foes; 2 cagers killed in crash

NEW YORK—Shaquille O'Neal never left the locker room, and the rest of the Lakers never really showed up, either.

With O'Neal sitting out because of a foot injury, the New York Knicks attacked the basket and ran the fastbreak much more than usual Sunday as they defeated the Lakers 91-81.

Allan Houston scored 33 points and Latrell Sprewell added 28 for the Knicks, who snapped a three-game losing streak and improved to 11-5 against teams from the Western Conference.

In the only other NBA game Sunday, Allen Iverson scored 27 points, 16 in the fourth quarter, and three other Philadelphia players reached double figures as the 76ers won their 13th straight road game Sunday, 86-81 at Indiana.

The 76ers tied the Chicago Bulls and Boston Celtics for the fifth-longest road winning streak in NBA history, even though Iverson was not at his best.

In Byers, Colorado, two Oklahoma State college basketball players and eight staffers and broadcasters associated with the team were killed when their plane crashed in a snowstorm while returning from a game in Colorado.

All 10 people aboard died, officials said. The plane, one of three chartered by the school, crashed Saturday about 40 miles east of Denver after taking off from Jefferson County Airport.

The school said the 10 killed were: Oklahoma State players Nate Fleming and Dan Lawson, sports information employee Will Hancock, director of basketball operations Pat Noyes, trainer Brian Luinstra, student manager Jared Weiberg, broadcast engineer Kendall Durfey, broadcaster Bill Teegins, pilot Denver Mills and co-pilot Bjorn Falistrom. *AP*

St. Scholastica's jins shine

ST. SCHOLASTICA'S College and Assumption College emerged as champions in the collegiate and secondary divisions, respectively, in the 2001 WNCAA taekwondo championship held last Sunday at the Assumption College gym in San Lorenzo Village, Makati City.

St. Scholastica topped the collegiate division after collecting two gold medals, a silver and a bronze, edging University of Assumption College-Pampanga, which won two golds.

Rizal Technological University was third with a gold and two silvers. Assumption College settled for fourth, while Lyceum finished fifth after the one-day event sponsored by Fila.

Rosales winds up 3rd, pockets ₱2.47M in Miami

JENNIFER Rosales won nearly half of what she earned in her entire rookie season last year after posting a career-best third place finish in The Office Depot, the third leg of the LPGA in Miami, Florida won by Korean Grace Park yesterday.

A late rally by Rosales where she birdied thrice in a four-hole stretch from the 14th sparked the Filipino's biggest showing so far as a pro, finishing off a 70 for a 282 aggregate like Karen Weiss.

Rosales picked up her biggest paycheck so far of $49,817 (about P2.47 million based on a P49.7 exchange rate) which is already close to half of the $110,000 in winnings she got in 2000.

The 22-year-old former NCAA champ could have won more if not for a bogey on the last hole, missing a short five-footer for par and a tie for second with Australian hotshot Karrie Webb.

Webb relinquished the title she won the past two years to Park who prevailed by one stroke with a 71 and a 280 aggregate. Webb also shot a 71 in the final round.

"I was too pumped up on the last hole. I killed my drive and hit my second shot so solid that I missed the green," Rosales told the INQUIRER. "I hit a good chip though but failed to return the par putt."

Rosales said that she looks forward to bigger things ahead after the impressive finish.

"It was a great experience for me. At least next time, I know how to handle it. I think that this is going to be a good year for me."

Dorothy Delasin, who like Jennifer placed 51st in the opening leg in Orlando two weeks ago, finally broke par with a 71 but it could only bring her no higher than 42nd. The reigning Rookie of the Year won $3,902.

Rosales was even par for 13 holes with birdies on the first and fifth against bogeys on the third and fourth. She went on a birdie binge starting on the 14th, then on the 15th and again on the 17th before that final-hole miscue. *Jong Arcano*

ROSALES FILE PHOTO

Calcavecchia romps to record win

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona — Mark Calcavecchia's day started early with a five-shot lead and an 8-iron he couldn't wait to hit. It ended 28 holes later with a spot in the Professional Golfers Association Tour record book and the Phoenix Open trophy secure in his grasp.

Calcavecchia birdied four of the last five holes Sunday to win the Phoenix Open with a 28-under-par 256, breaking a record held for 46 years by Mike Souchak for lowest 72-hole score.

Calcavecchia also set a record for most birdies in 72 holes, making 32 of them over four days on the par-71 TPC of Scottsdale course to win by eight shots over Rocco Mediate.

He did it on a day when neither Tiger Woods nor anyone in the rest of the field was much of a threat. Calcavecchia returned from Saturday's suspended third round to hit an 8-iron close for birdie on the ninth hole en route to a 64, then turned around and shot a 67 in the final 18 holes.

The only suspense remaining in the final round was whether Calcavecchia would break the record for lowest score set by Souchak in the 1955 Texas Open. By the time he ran off four straight birdies beginning on the 14th hole to secure the mark, much of the huge crowd had already left for home to watch the Super Bowl.

"It's been a long time. At least it seems like it's been a long time," said the 40-year-old Calcavecchia, whose last win came in the 1998 Honda Classic.

Calcavecchia, who took command of the tournament with a second round 60, had to play 28 holes Sunday after the third round was suspended because of lightning and hail with Calcavecchia in the ninth fairway waiting to hit his second shot.

Much of the crowd was on hand to watch Woods, who rewarded them with a 65 that left him 15 shots off the pace. It was the farthest behind Woods finished in a tournament in nearly three years, though he finished tied for fifth.

It was the fifth straight tournament that Woods has failed to win, and he had his streak of 52 straight rounds of par or better snapped with a 73 in the second round. Still, Woods said he was not concerned with his game.

"I'm not playing badly," he said. "I just need to get some of those putts that have lipped out go in."

Woods was a late entry into the tournament, but Pebble Beach was always on his schedule and he was eager to get there. Woods played numerous junior tournaments in the area and played there often when he was in college. *AP*

9-cock derby today

IT'S going to be a slambang showdown between local and international cockfight stars when the "Mandaluyong International 9-Cock Derby" gets under way at the Mandaluyong Coliseum beginning at 5 p.m. today.

Sponsors are Pagcor-Casino Filipino and Sagupaan Super Feeds in cooperation with Lakpue Drug Inc.

More than 60 first class encounters are lined up in today's 2-cock elimination round. The semis (3-cock) fires off on Thursday, while the finale (4-cock) is on Saturday. Derby host is businessman Vic Yu.

Bannering the tough Philippine contingent is sportsman Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), who ruled last year's edition using the Roundhead Hatch Murphy and Yellow Legged Hatch. Joining him are United Cockers Association (Ucap) and National Cockers Association (NCA) stalwarts.

Chuck Berry of Oklahoma, USA, who scored eight wins and one less last year, is back with his high-flying Irish Whitehackle which is feared for its remarkable staying power during drag fights.

Joining Berry are Paul Sparks of Alabama, Bobby Jones of Texoma Game Club (Texas), Gregg Ayroso of California, Travis Clark of Stone County, Missouri and George Torres and Gerry Douglas of California and Puerto Rican Ruben Rodriguez.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA – Georgetown Hoyas vs Syracuse Orangemen at 8 a.m. (r –11 p.m) on ESPN

Chinese National Basketball League at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

NBA - Phoenix Suns vs Boston Celtics at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Superbowl at 11 a.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: Golfglobe 2001 at 7:30 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

PGA Phoenix Open, Day Two at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

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Per DTI NCR Permit #0083, Series of 2001

- Jennifer 3rd in Miami, earns P2.47M A15
- Ravens rout Giants to win Super Bowl A15
- Shark vs Hapee in PBL today A15

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

SMB exec dared me–DI

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DANNY Ildefonso has broken his silence, saying it was the dare of a top San Miguel Beer official that led him to the doors of Tanduay Gold.

He said his talent was practically belittled by the official.

"He told me I couldn't get an offer sheet from any team," Ildefonso said in Tagalog. "But he added that if I could get one, San Miguel would match it without questions asked."

But as things turned out, San Miguel did not match Tanduay Gold's offer-sheet of P96 million spread over 16 years for Ildefonso.

In a Pontius Pilate-like move, SMB tossed the deal into the lap of PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino, who responded by ordering Tanduay to amend the offer sheet "for its disturbing contents." (*See related story.*)

The 24-year-old reigning MVP, who spoke about the offer sheet on Sunday at the Big Dome, refused to name the official "out of respect."

Ildefonso talked about the details of the offer sheet after he was disallowed by officials of the Philippine Basketball Association to march during the opening ceremonies of the league's 27th season.

The PBA move to bar the cager from marching puzzled kibitzers, angered Ildefonso's fans and was recorded as a first in league history that saw a reigning MVP getting restrained by the league's own gods from joining the parade of teams.

Ildefonso, the unanimous choice for the MVP award last year, was in tears as he left the Big Dome, banished like a common criminal intruding into a for-members-only party.

"Had I known I wouldn't be allowed to parade with my fellow Beermen," said Ildefonso, "I wouldn't have come here in the first place. But coach Jong (Uichico of San Miguel) told me I could come, so I came."

Uichico confirmed to the INQUIRER that he indeed told Ildefonso to join the ceremonies.

Ildefonso said his woes would not have "gone this far" had "the official not made the dare."

Ildefonso said he was merely following the rules of professionalism when he showed up at the Big Dome for San Miguel Beer even after he had signed the offer sheet from Tanduay Gold.

"I don't want to be perceived as only after the money," said Ildefonso. "But they dared us to seek an offer sheet with a promise that they will match it."

Said Ildefonso: "Please don't blame me for signing it because only a fool would not sign it. I only had my family in my mind when I signed it."

Although Bert Villa-Abrille, in a talk with the INQUIRER, had assured that the Beermen would match the offer sheet, he soon found himself vowing to elevate the issue to the commissioner's office.

When the 6-foot-6 Ildefonso was disallowed to join the parade, Bernardino explained the move by saying, "Techically, he has no team."

Ildefonso repaired to a restaurant near the SMB offices in Ortigas, where he was consoled by several members of the SMB coaching staff that included head coach Jong Uichico, consultant Ron Jacobs, manager Robert Non and official Nazario Avendaño.

EDWIN BACASMAS

ILDEFONSO: Unlucky MVP?

Jun wants contract revised

By Jong Arcano

Games Tomorrow (Philsports Arena)
5:15 p.m.—Tanduay vs Purefoods
7:30 p.m.—San Miguel vs Barangay Ginebra

WHETHER Danny Ildefonso plays with a new Tanduay uniform or his old San Miguel Beer No. 10 jersey tomorrow will depend on how fast Tanduay can solve a riddle given them yesterday by PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino.

Bernardino said the 16-year, P96-million offer sheet tendered by Tanduay Gold to Ildefonso needs to be revised "to conform to laws under the salary cap scheme."

The scheme reads: "To contain a price (bidding) war among the teams, thus keep the compensation expenses on players by the teams within manageable and affordable levels."

Bernardino has given Tanduay until 5 p.m. today to come up with the re-structured offer sheet.

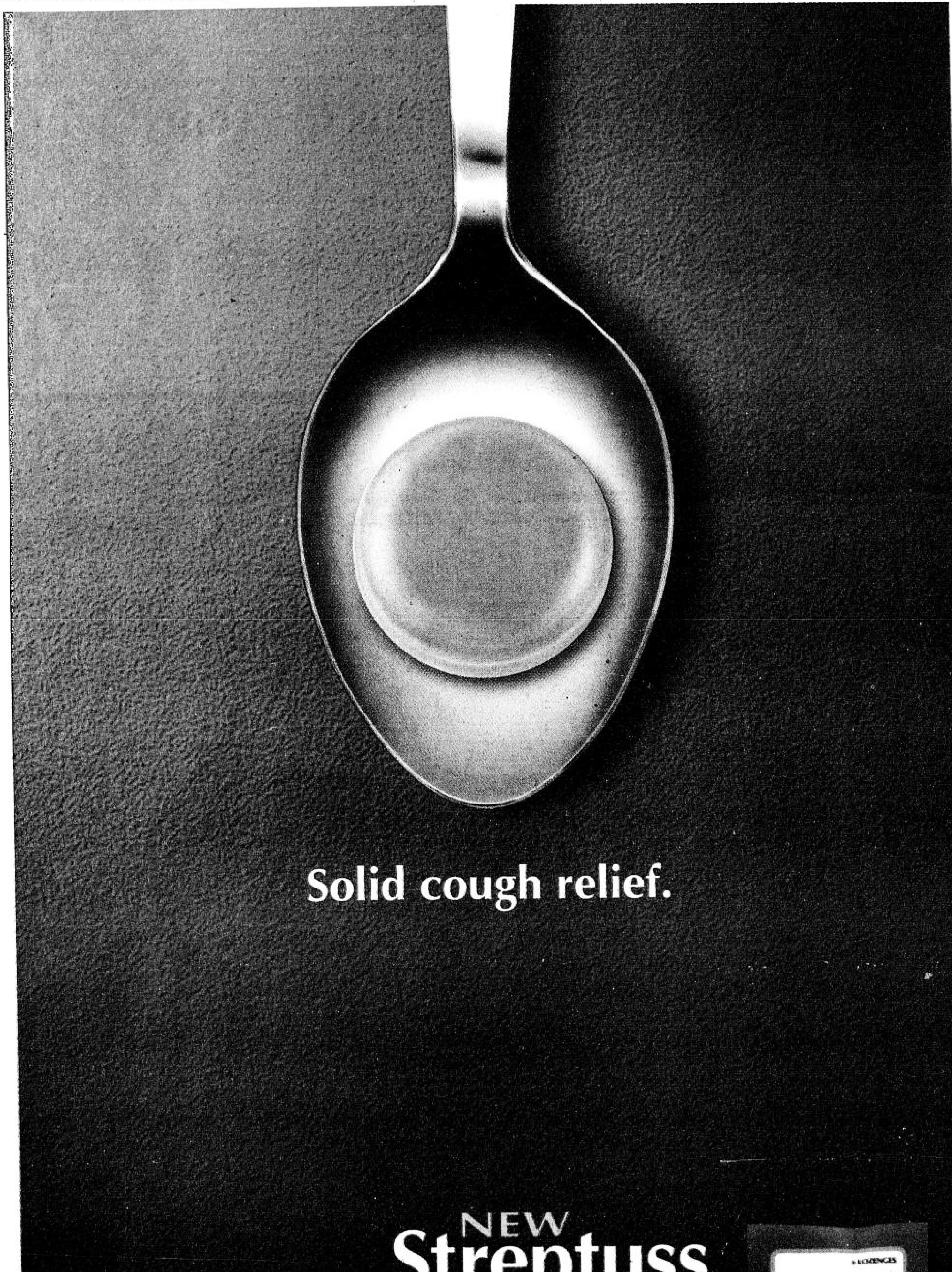
Tanduay will make its All-Filipino debut tomorrow against Purefoods while San Miguel battles Ginebra.

In a letter to Heinrich Tan Khoo, alternate governor and team manager of Tanduay, Bernardino took potshots at the bonus scheme and the time span of 16 years stipulated in the contract.

What Bernardino did not particularly like was Ildefonso's bonus scheme: P50,000 per won game in the eliminations, P60,000 in the semis and P70,000 in the finals.

Bernardino said Ildefonso might breach the P14.52 million team bonus if Tanduay wins all its games in a conference.

In defending his decision to quash the contract, Bernardino said: "The Commissioner of the Association has the duty to review the Offer Sheet for legal sufficiency and validity in accordance with established PBA rules."



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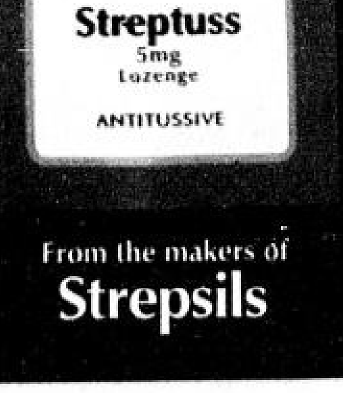

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Abalos vows garbage solution in 15 days A18

12 '₱50-M Gang' men sentenced to death

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A CALOOCAN Regional Trial Court yesterday sentenced to death 12 members of a notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang for the abduction of a Filipino-Chinese businessman in 1998.

A 13th female member of the P50 Million Gang was meted out the life sentence.

Judge Bayani Rivera of RTC Branch 129 took only about half an hour to hand down the sentence on members of the kidnap syndicate who abducted Allan Co on Sept. 23, 1998 on 2nd Ave., Caloocan City.

The group gained the notorious tag P50 Million Gang for asking ransom of P150 million from families of its victims, who were mostly members of the Filipino-Chinese.

Sentenced to death were Federito, Gerrydel, Ernesto Cave, Mamerto, Eddie Obtenalla, Generoso Nuevo, Sanny Castante, James Bond Bucala, Richard Ordanez, Elmer Garcia, Freddie Colobong, and Amadeo Prado.

Rivera ordered the kidnappers to pay the victim P200,000 in damages.

Freddie's wife Lolita was sentenced to life imprisonment after she was seen by the victim in the gang's safehouse in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Court records showed that Co was on his way to his family's garments factory on Tayuman Street, Manila on board a Toyota Rav-4 when Ordanez, Nuevo, Bucala, Gerrydel Cave, and an unidentified man—all armed with M-16 rifles and a .45-caliber pistol—blocked his path on 2nd Ave., Caloocan.

The unidentified abductor commandeered Co's Rav-4, while the rest of the suspects dragged the victim into their Toyota Corolla.

Co was brought to the gang's safehouse on Kansas Street, Villa Sol Subdivision, Angeles City, where he was detained for one month.

The group threatened to kill the young businessman if his family would not pay the ransom.

On Oct. 28, 1998, operatives of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force headed by Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao raided the safehouse, rescued the victim, and arrested Federito and Gerrydel Cave.

Co was found chained to a window.

Hours later, police barged into another safehouse on California Street in the same subdivision and rescued Joseph Hodreal, Dennis Annam, and George Go.

Arrested were Mamerto Obtenalla, Nuevo, and Castante.

One finding bared that the victims were treated like dogs.

The abductors told the court that they did not know of the group's operation and that they only went to the safehouses to perform errands.

But Rivera gave credence to the testimony of the victim who positively identified the abductors.

The male kidnappers were brought to the Bureau of Corrections in Muntinlupa, and the female suspect to the Correctional Institution for Women in Mandaluyong.

FLASHBACK: Former actor Joseph Estrada, then still the President of the Philippines, shown talking to former PNP Chief Panfilo Lacson in this file photo, after the successful rescue of Allan Co (second from right), George Go, Joseph Hodreal and his driver Daniel Annam (both partly hidden).

EDWIN BACASMAS

Fake bomb found where Erap hears Sunday Mass

BY AGNES E. DONATO

POLICE on Sunday were alerted to another bomb threat, this time at the historic Pinaglabanan Church in San Juan, where the family of deposed President Estrada usually hears Mass.

But Supt. Gilbert Cruz, San Juan police chief, was quick to deny speculations that the bomb, which turned out to be a dud, was meant to harass the Estradas.

Cruz dismissed the threat as a mere handiwork of drug addicts pulling a prank.

This was the fourth bomb scare to hit San Juan this month. The Virra Mall shopping center in Greenhills earlier received the brunt of the scare with three bomb threats, Cruz said.

The device, wrapped with masking tape and placed inside a blue plastic bag, even had a switch and little wires to make it look real, police said.

FAKE BOMB/ A18

Man rapes all his 4 daughters

AN 18-YEAR-OLD girl, made a sex slave by her own father for six years, mustered enough courage and reported her ordeal to the Marikina City police on Sunday.

The victim told investigators her three sisters were similarly victimized by their father.

SPO4 Nenita Abanes of the Marikina Women and Children Concerns Unit identified the suspect as a certain Rodrigo, 43, whose surname could not be divulged be-

MAN RAPES/ A18

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HONDA

Little- known anecdote about Abadia

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE MACAPAGAL administration should stop worrying about what the outside world thinks of Edsa Revolution, Part II, that installed her in power.

The Western press looks askance at our version of the Fall of Bastille. Singapore statesman Lee Kuan Yew said that Joseph Estrada should have been deposed through impeachment.

Those people should stop meddling in our affairs. Although we have a democracy that is patterned after that of most countries in the West, ours is a different culture and setting.

We may have a copycat government, but our radical change of leadership is worthy of being copied by other governments whose leaders are corrupt and incompetent.

* * *

After Edsa II, national and local leaders will think twice before they engage in corrupt activities. They know what an enraged citizenry is capable of.

With the help of media—TV, radio and newspapers—people have become emboldened to demand utmost sincerity and competence from their leaders.

From now on, the enlightened citizenry should get the government that they deserve.

* * *

The poor, ignorant *masa* will still have a say in electing leaders because they have the numbers.

But we hope they will now listen to their intellectual betters in choosing elective officials. They will now select leaders according to issues, not popularity.

Edsa II, covered live by TV and radio, gave the *masa* an education in politics and governance.

* * *

Let's hope the appointment of former Deputy Speaker Simeon Datumanong as secretary of public works will redound to the benefit of all Filipinos, not just the Muslims or Moros.

The Filipino Muslims are very clannish people. And because they think in terms of clans, families or tribes, they forget about the people outside their extended family, the Christians and lumads.

By and large, a Muslim national leader, like Datumanong now is, will do his job according to how much benefit will accrue to his family, clan, tribe or fellow Muslims.

Mr. Datumanong, please be different from other Muslim leaders who have a parochial mentality.

* * *

I know you'll say I'm a bigot, prejudiced against the Muslims.

But I'm not only the one who thinks that many Muslim or Moro leaders embrace the Muslim-first mentality to the detriment of other ethnic Filipinos. People who don't believe me should ask a non-Muslim from Mindanao.

For example, our Muslim ambassadors to Middle East countries always think in terms of how their relatives, fellow tribesmen and fellow Muslims will benefit from the host countries. Christian and other Filipinos are sidetracked.

Mr. Datumanong, *baka naman ang mga* Maguindanao, Maranaw, Tausug *ang makikinabang sa iyo sa* Department of Public Works and Highways.

* * *

One of President Macapagal's early official acts was to sign an executive order banning her Cabinet officials from having business deals with her husband, Mike Arroyo.

Did she have to do that? *Masyado namang* over-acting or OA!

I can't blame her for issuing such an order because she's euphoric like deposed President Erap was when he said in that inaugural speech: *"Walang kaibigan, walang kamaganak, walang kumpare."*

Erap was referring to his relatives and friends who, he said, would not be given favors in his administration. It was his relatives, mistresses and cronies who caused his downfall.

Let's see how long Ms Macapagal can keep her promise.

* * *

Already, the new President is being criticized for appointing to her Cabinet people with dubious credentials like Gen. Lisandro Abadia, former Armed Forces of Staff.

Abadia has been appointed national security adviser, a very sensitive position. He was apparently chosen because he is close to former Tarlac congressman Jose Peping Cojuangco, brother of ex- President Cory Aquino. In fact, Abadia was appointed AFP chief during Ms Aquino's watch.

If we go by reports that he touched the pension funds of soldiers when he was AFP chief of staff, he is the biggest crook of them all.

Ms Macapagal needs Abadia like a hole in her head.

* * *

There's a little known anecdote about Abadia that should be highlighted.

While his pension-fund caper was being investigated, a story came out that when the military-owned Retirement and Separation Benefits Systems (RSBS), a soldier's pension fund company, invested in real estate, Abadia made an indirect pact with the rebels.

How? The RSBS bought a big piece of land which was infested with the New People Army (NPA). To protect the RSBS investment, the company paid protection money to the NPA, so the story went.

At that time, Abadia, as AFP chief of staff, was also concurrent chair of the RSBS.

Now, how can you trust a guy with the national security portfolio who bribed rebels at a time when he should be fighting them?

Abalos vows garbage solution in 15 days

By Nelson Flores

ABALOS

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. claims he can solve Metro Manila's garbage problem in 15 days through recycling and waste composting.

Abalos said the current garbage problem of Metro Manila is due to the failure of the previous MMDA administration to seriously consider alternative means of waste disposal, other than the traditional use of sanitary landfills.

The new MMDA chief said the first thing he learned after he assumed office was that a number of waste disposal proposals were submitted to the agency but were not acted upon.

"I don't know why. Maybe it's because the MMDA is already committed to a number of landfill operators and contractors, as evidenced by lawsuits filed by at least three waste disposal contractors against the agency," Abalos said.

Abalos believed that, with localized recycling and composting, Metro Manila's garbage would be gone within at least two weeks.

He added only recycling and composting methods would be viable in the face of stiff public opposition to the continued use and operation of sanitary landfills.

Through composting, wastes are transformed into fertilizer and other useful farming aids; while in recycling, garbage materials such as plastic, paper, and glass bottles, are collected for remanufacture.

Abalos said the MMDA has enough funds to finance the construction of composting plants all over Metro manila.

He added that a number of sites have already been identified where the plants could be built.

According to Abalos, almost all Metro Manila mayors have already agreed to set up composting plants in their respective areas. He said a small problem could arise in Pasay City and the Pateros municipality because there are no more space to accommodate such plants.

"Right now we have very successful composting plants in Parañaque City and in the Municipality of Carmona in Cavite," Abalos said.

Abalos added he has been receiving favorable feedback from officials of adjoining provinces of Metro Manila. He said a number of these officials expressed interest in the setting up of composting plants in their areas.

Abalos said composting plants are not landfills. These are factories that would produce jobs and income for the local community. He suggested that, from now on, waste should be treated as raw material and a source of decent livelihood.

At the same time, Abalos said he would seek the help of educators next week to teach elementary students proper waste disposal and the correct way to segregate.

Abalos also invited the public to attend the garbage summit on Friday at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City to help the MMDA formulate correct policies on waste disposal.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

FREEDOM proved short-lived for six of the 10 Binondo Police Station inmates who bolted from the detention cell on Friday. Yesterday, Manila policemen recaptured the six and Western Police District director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr. reinstated Supt. Juanito de Guzman, who was earlier relieved because of the mass escape.

6 escapees arrested; station commander regains post

By Jerome Aning

SIX of the 10 inmates who bolted the detention cell of the Binondo police station on Friday have been recaptured by Manila policemen.

With this development, the station's commander, Supt. Juanito de Guzman, earlier relieved because of the mass escape, was reinstated by Western Police District director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr.

The six suspects who are now again behind bars were identified as Raul Samarro, Virgilio Ibarle, Jomer Rosaroso and Dan Logo, all charged with theft or robbery; Dennis Corpin, charged with possession of deadly weapons; and Nazareno Carsena, who is under investigation for vagrancy.

The six, who were presented to Mayor Lito Atienza at City Hall yesterday, were re-arrested in separate operations over the weekend and yesterday in Tondo, Manila; Dasmariñas, Cavite; and Sapang Palay, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan.

Chief Insp. Eduardo Wycoco, who temporarily replaced De Guzman as station chief, said the latter personally supervised the operation to seek and recapture the escapees.

Wycoco said station operatives are fast closing in on the four remaining escapees identified as Tommy Mejia, Marvin Bondoc, Ernesto Cerito and Bartolome Rosaroso.

The inmates reportedly used a strong wooded club to bend the iron bars of the cell at the WPD Station 11 compound on Meisic Street, Binondo before dawn Friday.

The jailbreak took place undetected because there was no officer standing around during the time.

But one of the inmates presented to the mayor yesterday claimed the policemen at the station were fast asleep.

Another said they decided to escape because their food rations were inadequate.

After the escape, Razon immediately caused the relief of De Guzman, station platoon commander Insp. Alfredo Opriasa and duty desk officer SPO4 Romeo Romero.

The mayor approved De Guzman's reinstatement but Opriasa and Romero will face the administrative charges stemming from the incident.

Pregnant housemaid commits suicide

A PREGNANT 17-year-old housemaid, who was reportedly abandoned by her boyfriend, hanged herself in Paco, Manila on Sunday, police said.

SPO4 Rodolfo Rival of the Western Police District's homicide section identified the victim as Melissa Sanoria, single, a native of Ormoc City and stay-in househelper at 2060 Onyx St., Paco, Manila.

Sanoria's employers, live-in partners Ronaldo Perez and Magnolia Ragacion, discovered Sanoria's limp body hanging from a wooden beam at their house's laundry area around 4 p.m. A nylon rope was wound around her neck.

The couple said they last saw the maid around 2 p.m. Ragacion said the maid told her she would be taking a bath. Ragacion added that she and her husband took a siesta upstairs until 4 p.m.

Ragacion said Sanoria was depressed after her boyfriend, identified only as "Rene," left her a few days ago when he learned that she was three-months pregnant.

The victim was also disturbed because she did not want her parents back in Ormoc to know about her pregnancy, Ragacion said.

SPO4 Rival said he would look for other possible motives behind the alleged suicide.

He said he was not totally discounting foul play. *Jerome Aning*

METROBRIEFS

Boy, 13, hostaged

A DRUG-CRAZED man held hostage a 13-year-old boy for nearly four hours inside a toilet in Quezon City on Sunday. Police arrested Frederico Nuesca, 43, of 96 General Avenue Barangay Tandang Sora, Quezon City after he held hostage the boy, a resident of Marcel Street Barangay Sangandaan, also in Quezon City, said investigator PO3 Robert Dejucas. Nuesca, who was said to be under the influence of drugs, thought someone was out to kill him and allegedly barged into the boy's home about 4:30 p.m. The hostage told police that he was taking a bath inside their toilet when he heard Nuesca entering their house. He said he peeked and saw Nuesca closing the windows and door of the house. He said this alarmed him so he went out of the bathroom to confront Nuesca. But when Nuesca saw him, the boy said Nuesca pulled out a knife and threatened to kill him. He said Nuesca then dragged him toward the toilet, where Nuesca held him hostage for the next three and a half hours. Police arrived but failed to convince Nuesca who said he only wanted to surrender to Caloocan Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, who was not available. But Supt. Gerardo Retuita, an Ilocano like Nuesca, managed to convince the suspect that no one was going to hurt him and that the authorities would protect him against the man he said was after him. Police said they would have to determine if Nuesca had been under the influence of drugs when he took the boy hostage. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Killers of Peewee's grandson fall

PASAY police yesterday arrested the suspects in the killing of a grandson of Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad on Jan. 19. Suspects Nelson Naz, 27, Zaldy Bautista, 27, and Jonathan Ursaga, 24, all of Sto. Nino in Pasay City were arrested inside a hideout in Sto. Nino, Pasay City after police conducted a weeklong surveillance operation, said Pasay police chief Supt. Alejandro Gutierrez. He said police are hunting down a certain "alias Buloy," who is the reported mastermind of the killing. Trinidad's grandson, Jaime Polhen III, 14, of Kaligtasan Street, was mauled and shot by the suspects while walking along the street about 10 p.m. on Jan. 19. *Alcuin Papa*

Guard stabbed dead

SECURITY guard Ronald Tesara, 33, met a gruesome death yesterday in Las Piñas after he was stabbed to death by suspected members of the "Agaw-Armas" gang. Tesara, married, of 365 Interior, Talon II, Las Piñas and a security guard of the Eagle Eye Security Agency, died from several stab wounds in the body. His body was found inside a bathroom on the first floor of the Macro Goldes Star building on the Alabang-Zapote Road in Almaza, Las Piñas, according to SPO3 Roberto Alipalo. But police could not find his .38 service firearm. Tesara was last seen in the company of a friend identified only as Crispin. The Las Piñas police, still investigating the case, is expected to come up with possible suspects. *Alcuin Papa*

Detained foreigners pin hopes on new government

By Alcuin Papa

FOREIGNERS detained at the Bureau of Immigration (BI) jail in Bicutan, Taguig appealed yesterday to newly installed immigration chief Andrea Domingo for their immediate release.

The foreigners, who said they have been arrested illegally, have complained that they were denied bail and their basic rights during the term of former BI chief Rufus Rodriguez and BI intelligence chief Supt. Angelito Tan.

They have also complained of the lack of sanitation and medical attention inside the detention center.

"We are very hopeful for our release with the new immigration chief because we have heard good things about her. We feel this is good for us and we are encouraged," Canadian Raymond Jackson told the Inquirer.

Last week, Jackson and the other inmates sent a signed petition to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Domingo and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez "for the immediate termination of all immigration cases by presidential order pursuant to legal provisions of bail-bond release."

The petition, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, also said that the official bail is P20,000 but the BI under Rodriguez and Tan had pegged it at P51,500.

The petitioners added that "any successful bail bond by and through Col. Tan ranges from P300,000 to P500,000" and that Tan had been holding foreigners as "ransom detainees."

"Most of the foreigners here are married to Filipino wives with Filipino children. To deport them will be an injustice because it separates families, which is very sad and incomprehensible," the petition read.

Jackson and other inmates also said that, immediately after Domingo took her post, all inmates held inside the detention center's solitary confinement cells were released.

Aside from that, Domingo had sent immigration agents to talk to each of the 145 inmates privately regarding their cases.

"At first we were wondering why this was being done because the BI should have files on us. Maybe the last administration kept no files of our cases or that these files were hidden," Jackson said.

The inmates have also called off their mass hunger strike, which they started the other week.

Some 15 inmates, including Jackson, went on a hunger strike to dramatize their protest against their continued detention and denial of bail.

Domingo had been quoted as saying she favors the release of all inmates since the bureau and the government cannot afford the cost of feeding all of them on a daily basis.

Man . . .

(From page A17)

cause the three other victims were minors.

The suspect, said to be a drug dependent, had allegedly killed his own brother and has a reputation of often stabbing his wife.

The criminal instinct of the suspect had apparently scared the girls from telling on their father.

The victim said that her father started raping her when she was only 12 years old while they were still residing in Nueva Ecija. The abuses continued even after they transferred to Quezon City, and later to Marikina City.

Her other sisters also suffered the same fate but preferred to keep their ordeal a secret.

It was only on Jan. 25 when she learned from her three younger sisters that their father had also been raping them.

The suspect is detained at the police station. *Agnes Donato*

Fake bomb found where Erap . . .

(From page A17)

It was left inside the church's comfort room and was discovered Sunday around 9 a.m. when the former First Family usually attends Mass.

But Estrada and his family did not hear Sunday's Mass as they reportedly chose to stay in their house on Polk Street, North Greenhills.

Church marshall Rodrigo Llagas, 42, discovered the fake bomb on top of the toilet bowl and immediately informed PO3 Hernan Cruz, head of the local police bomb disposal unit.

To avoid sending hundreds of parishioners into panic, PO3 Cruz used a hook and line and discreetly took the tightly wrapped device to an open area of the church compound. It was then that police learned the bomb was a dud.

Earlier, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada complained he had been receiving nasty text messages, as well as threats on his cellular and landline phones.

'Gladiator' revisited

By Paul Y. Daza

DID any scene in Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" acknowledge that Christians were fed to the lions in the Colosseum?

Which actor/actress in the movie knew more about the Roman Empire than the history experts who served as consultants on the film?

How did the filmmakers finish the movie even though costar Oliver Reed suddenly died before filming ended?

The answers to these questions and tons of other bonuses will be found in the truly special DVD of "Gladiator," released in Metro Manila video stores earlier this month.

Just last week, "Gladiator" won the Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture Drama, and the movie proved to be that rare commercial and artistic success when it was shown in Philippine theaters last year.

The DVD gives you a chance to relive your favorite moments from the acclaimed masterpiece, and to learn more about the meticulous planning and preparation which goes into the production of a huge film like this.

Film buffs who are ready to shell out P1,000 to own the DVD forever will not be disappointed. Others who don't have money to burn can rent it for P50 at their nearest video shop. It'll take at least eight hours to go through everything on the double-disc set.

For everyone

"Gladiator" is the visually stunning action epic starring the acclaimed Russell Crowe. He is Maximus, a tireless, brilliant general who becomes a slave when he defies the treachery of an ambitious ruler. From slave, he becomes a popular gladiator because of his ability to deliver violent entertainment in the arena to a bloodthirsty crowd.

As fate would have it, Maximus' popularity as a gladiator will bring him face to face with the very man who caused his downfall, and give him the chance to exorcise the anger that has been festering in his heart.

"Gladiator" is a movie for everyone. Men will like the brutal action scenes showing arrows piercing warriors in their foreheads and chests, and the shots where a macho woman was sliced at the waist by a blade protruding from a chariot wheel. The DVD remote control will even allow you to watch the action in slow motion and analyze your favorite shows one frame at a time.

Other gimmicks

In addition to the fact that DVD allows consumers to get the finest video and digital audio, there are other gimmicks available for the obsessed fan. "Gladiator's" subtitles will allow you to decipher many of the screenplay's eloquent lines, which were hard to understand because of the emotional delivery of certain actors.

In the moments before Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) murders his father Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris), for example, who knew that Commodus' lines are as follows: "One kind word, one full hug . . . where you pressed me to your chest and held me tight, would have been like the sun on my heart for a thousand years."

You like bonus documentaries? There are two of them in the "Gladiator" DVD. One is the obligatory 20-minute feature about the making of the film, where everyone in the cast and crew says that everyone in the team is "brilliant" and a "genius" (in the case of "Gladiator," these numerous compliments are true, thank the lord).

ACCLAIMED Australian Russel Crowe shares the movie with high-tech wizardry.

Deleted scenes

You'll also see how computer graphics transformed an incomplete two-story mock-up in Malta into the awe-inspiring, historically-accurate Roman Colosseum.

There is another 45-minute made-for-TV special which is about the historical gladiators. Who knew that hundreds of years ago, the more popular gladiators already had action figures of them made, and that these fighters were the most sexually desirable men in Rome, even though many of them had pieces of their faces missing?

Then there are the deleted scenes, which can be viewed with the dialogue accompanying them or with visionary director Scott's commentary about why the scene had to be removed from the film. Aside from a scene in the coliseum showing hungry lions approaching fearless Christian women and children, there are 11 other sequences saved "from the cutting room floor."

Marketing techniques

My personal favorite among these bonuses is a music video assembled just for the DVD, which consists of footage discarded from the finished picture. It is a beautifully filmed montage assembled by editor Pietro Scalia and set to the haunting music score of Hans Zimmer and vocalist Lisa Gerrard.

Its highlight is a shot where the camera circles a tormented Russell Crowe as he has a vision that his wife and son are about to meet a cruel fate.

There are also several trailers that may give you an insight about Hollywood marketing techniques.

Also included are behind-the-scenes photographs showing the cast and crew at work, as well as concept sketches of the sets and costumes, which later had to be translated into three-dimensional buildings and clothes.

With a DVD as packed as this, who needs to go to an exclusive film school? For me, the most valuable and educational freebie on the disc is Scott's insightful commentary. The "Gladiator" DVD allows you to bring the eloquent, knowledgeable director into your home and have him talk to you for 155 minutes about every aspect of the filmmaking process.

Romancing 'Reminiscing,' the third time around

AUSTIN

N 1999, Michael Johnson, Stephen Bishop and David Pomeranz awakened romance in the hearts of thousands of Filipinos in the Valentine show "Reminiscing," held at the Folk Arts Theater.

Pomeranz has since returned to Manila several times to wax new albums.

Last year, it was the turn of Christopher Cross, Rex Smith, Kenny Rankin and R&B diva Angela Bofill, all in a two-night Valentine musical, "Reminiscing 2," at the newly renovated Araneta Coliseum.

"Reminiscing 2" featured romantic pop from the '70s and '80s like "On and On," "Hiding Inside Myself," "Simply Jessie," "This Time I'll be Sweeter," "Break It to Me Gently," "Sailing," and many more.

On Feb. 9 and 10, another blockbuster event is expected in "Reminiscing 3," again at the Araneta Coliseum, featuring diva Patti Austin and pop sensation El Debarge.

Robert Ocampo, systems analyst at an investment house, says he watched the first two "Reminiscing" concerts and looks forward to the third edition. As a high school student in the late '70s, Ocampo only dreamed of watching his favorite singers live. Now, his dream has come true.

Ocampo says he will watch "Reminiscing 3" with his wife and three kids.

Tricia Santos, who's only in her 20s, is watching the concert for the first time. A physical therapist, she says she decided to buy tickets after she heard her officemates raving about last year's concert.

Austin is one of the most versatile and dynamic soul and jazz artists in the entertainment scene. She will perform her most popular hits as well as new songs and standards.

Before hitting the big time, Austin was the undisputed "queen" of the New York jingle and session scene.

Her debut album for Quincy Jones' QWest label in the '90s, "Every Home Should Have One," featured the chart-topping "Baby Come to Me," a duet with James Ingram.

Another Austin/Ingram duet in the '90s, "How Do You Keep the Music Playing," was nominated for an Oscar.

Since then, Austin has recorded several albums and worked with many other notable artists and producers, among them, Dave Grusin, Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Frankie Valli, Joe Cocker, George Benson, Roberta Flack, Johnny Mathis, Steely Dan, Blues Brothers, Peabo Bryson, Jeffrey Osborn and Bryan Adams.

El Debarge, the other artist in "Reminiscing 3," is the soulful voice behind such hits as "Starlight Express," "All This Love," "Time Will Reveal," "Who's Johnny," "Rhythm of the Night," "Love Always," "Someone," "Who's Holding Donna Now," "The Heart Is Not So Smart" and "I Like It."

"Reminiscing 3" is sponsored by Asiana Airlines, Cravings and Skin Secrets AHA Soap.

Tickets are available at all SM TicketNet outlets. For more information, call telephone numbers 911-5555, 631-9676 and 893-0026.

After a band stint, new solo singer goes on to Next Level

By Remy M. Umerez

THE CENTER for Pop Music Foundation is to some of today's talents what "That's Entertainment" was in its own time—a breeding ground for future stars.

One of those who have been honed by the Center is Arlene Joanna Salvado, former lead vocalist of the defunct group Tangerine.

Arlene was only 17 when she represented Angelicum College to the Center's singing competition. She failed to make it to the championship round, but her exceptional voice did not escape the ears of one of the judges, composer Larry Hermoso, who invited her to audition for an all-girl band he was about to form.

She passed the audition. After weeks of rehearsals, the quintet called Tangerine was born. Hermoso is also the man behind another group, Jeremiah.

Tangerine's first and only album, from Ivory Records, produced a hit, "Huwag na Huwag." The group, however, soon disbanded.

Fortunately for Arlene, who is now 20, Ivory was quick to sign her up in a new contract that would launch her as a solo artist.

Says Ivory president Tony Ocampo: "She has the talent as well as the allure that made her a standout when she was the lead vocalist of the group. Our concept is to package her as a pop diva."

The album, simply titled "Arlene Salvado Solo," features pop and R&B songs, mostly on falling in love, including "Bakit Ikaw Pa Rin" and the newly released "I Will Love You More," which is on its way to becoming a hit.

Another potential hit is "Without You," about being alone but not feeling lonely. Its music video is aired on MTV Asia and Channel [V].

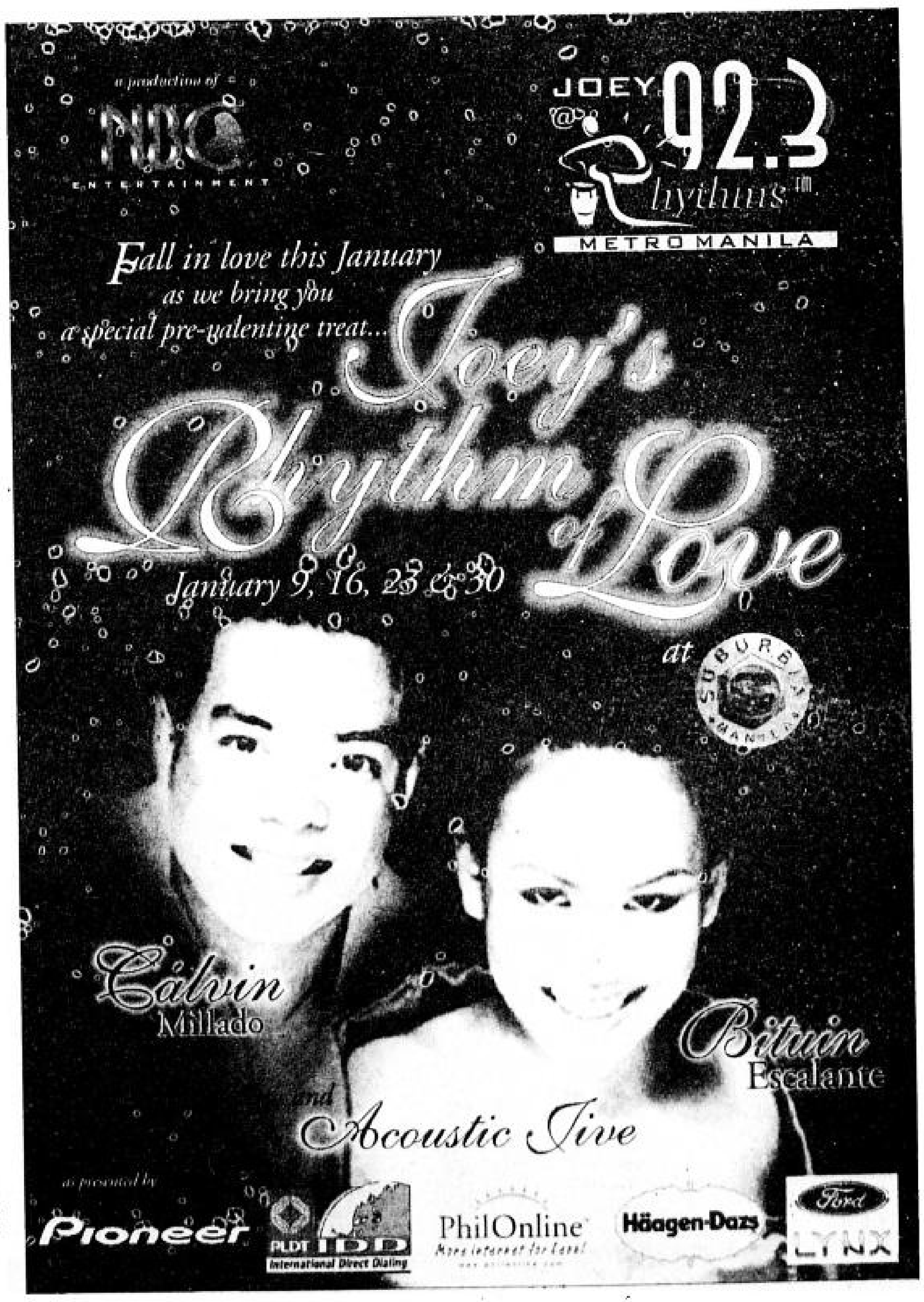
The album also offers two revivals: "He's Out of My Life" and a funky cover of the Rita Coolidge classic "I'd Rather Leave While I'm in Love."

Arlene joined a new band called Next Level, which performs Wednesdays at Siete Picados of Westin Philippine Plaza and Saturdays at Galo's in Sucat, Parañaque. She joined the group after one of its members, Gen Padena, got sick and she was requested to be a reliever.

Mondays, Arlene performs solo at Conway's Bar.

Arlene dreams of becoming as big as Regine Velasquez.

TO BE as big as Regine Velasquez is Arlene's dream.



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7	DOLBY SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
8	DOLBY SURROUND	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

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12	DOLBY SURROUND	WHIPPED

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL	RED PLANET
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7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PREDATOR FROM THE DEEP
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HIGHLANDER
9	DOLBY SURROUND	LITTLE NICKY
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11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

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2	DOLBY SURROUND	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
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5	DOLBY SURROUND	WHIPPED
6	DOLBY SURROUND	DUDE
7	DTS	RED PLANET
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	HIGHLANDER
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
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11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE 6TH DAY
12	DOLBY SURROUND	LITTLE NICKY

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5	ULTRA SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN
6	ULTRA SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
7	ULTRA SURROUND	BOOBA
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HIGHLANDER
9	ULTRA SURROUND	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
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2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BOOBA
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA

SM CEBU 2313876

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2	ULTRA SURROUND	MEET THE PARENTS
3	ULTRA SURROUND	LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE
4	ULTRA SURROUND	KANGKONG
5	ULTRA SURROUND	PREDATOR FROM THE DEEP
6	ULTRA SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
7	DOLBY SURROUND	WONDER BOYS

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2	ULTRA SURROUND	LOST SOULS
3	ULTRA SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
4	ULTRA SURROUND	MEET THE PARENTS
5	ULTRA SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN
6	ULTRA SURROUND	LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE
7	ULTRA SURROUND	THE 6TH DAY
8	ULTRA SURROUND	EMPERORS NEW GROOVE

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	RED PLANET
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	LITTLE NICKY
3	DOLBY SURROUND	BOOBA
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
6	DOLBY SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA

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4	AMERICAN PSYCHO (Phil. Premiere) Art Film in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	THE RED PLANET in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR in DTS SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	REMEMBER THE TITANS in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2	PROOF OF LIFE (Adv. Sceening) in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	BOOBA in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4	SOON TO OPEN Onstage

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1	PROOF OF LIFE (Adv. Sceening) THX in DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR in DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	LITTLE NICKY in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE RED PLANET in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BOOBA in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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Filinvest Festival Cinema (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

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2 (SDDS)	LITTLE NICKY
3 (DTS)	PROOF OFLIFE
4 GOLD (DTS)	RED PLANET
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	DUDE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	CLOSED
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	REMEMBER THE TITANS
8	TANGING YAMAN
9	BOOBA
10	BALAHIBONG PUSA

Pearl Plaza Cinemas (Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3 (DTS)	
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	REMEMBER THE TITANS

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3 (Kalaw) tel 536.4315

1 (DOLBY)	PROOF OF LIFE
2 (DTS)	RED PLANET
3	SUPER IDOL

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	BOOBA
2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

starmall Movies (Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	BOOBA
2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RED PLANET
5	WHIPPED

Metropolis (Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	PROOF OF LIFE
2	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
3	BOOBA
4	BALAHIBONG PUSA
5	HIGHLANDER
6	RED PLANET
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Spring (Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

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3	EROTIQUE

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City (Manila) tel 734.8588

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2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
4	HIGHLANDER
5	RED PLANET
6	DUDE
7 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE
8 (SDDS)	REMEMBER THE TITANS
9 (DOLBY)	LITTLE NICKY

Caloocan tel 362.3508

2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	BOOBA
4	MALIKOY ANG AGOS
5	
6	

Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781

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2	BOOBA
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
4 (SDDS)	LITTLE NICKY
5	HIGHLANDER
6 (DOLBY)	PROOF OF LIFE
7 (DTS)	RED PLANET
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Commonwealth tel 951.0083

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2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	TANGING YAMAN
4	RESERVE
5 (SDDS)	RED PLANET
6	BOOBA
7 (DOLBY)	HIGHLANDER
8	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

Ortigas tel 656.6795

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	RED PLANET
4	BALAHIBONG PUSA
5 (SDDS)	PROOF OF LIFE
6 (DOLBY)	BOOBA
7 (DOLBY)	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

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1	BOOBA

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4	PROOF OF LIFE

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3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

Super Cinerama (Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

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2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	PROOF OF LIFE
4	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
5	HIGHLANDER

Divisoria Mall (Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	BOOBA
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3	SUPER IDOL
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5	DUWAG LANG ANG SUMUSUKO
6	PROOF OF LIFE

Baclaran LRT Cinema tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	BOOBA
2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	BALAHIBONG PUSA
2	BOOBA
3 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	PROOF OF LIFE
2 (DTS)	HIGHLANDER
3 (DOLBY)	LITTLE NICKY
4	BOOBA

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BOOBA
2	BALAHIBONG PUSA
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
4 (DTS)	PROOF OF LIFE

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	CROCODILE
2	BOOBA
3 (DTS)	DUWAG LANG ANG SUMUSUKO
4	BALAHIBONG PUSA
5	PROOF OF LIFE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BALAHIBONG PUSA
2	BOOBA
3	HIGHLANDER

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 536.5101

1	BALAHIBONG PUSA
2	BOOBA
3	HGHLANDER

Olivarez Tagaytay tel (046) 413.0311

1	100 GIRLS
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3	BUHAY NA MANEKIN

Morales Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

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2	PROOF OF LIFE
3	CROCODILE

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	BOOBA
2	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
3	DUWAG LANG ANG SUMUSUKO
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Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel (049) 243.2783

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Fourstep (Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	BOOBA

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOOBA
2	KANGKONG
3	HIGHLANDFR

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3	BALAHIBONG PUSA
4	RED PLANET

Berma tel 879.2168

1	CLOSED
2	CLOSED

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Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

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a special presentation

Jaimie Rivera. . .

(From page A21)

heard Mass at Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, and she was surprised when the priest acknowledged her presence.

"He made me stand and recognized me for singing songs for the glory of God," she says. "I feel so blessed.

"When I was young, my only ambition was to sing in the choir, but I never did. Now I realized the Lord has a purpose for me. In my own little way, I am able to share my gift through singing."

The singer earlier conquered the music charts and the airlanes with her romantic pop ditties—"Hey, It's Me," "I've Fallen for You," "Mahal Naman Kita," "Love Me Again" and "Awit Para sa 'Yo."

"In my 14 years in show biz, I've never been more fulfilled than now," Jamie allows. "Even when I was doing 'Miss Saigon' in London, I never felt this kind of fulfillment. It's different."

Jamie has vowed to record more inspirational tunes and hopes to duplicate the feat of Gary Valenciano.

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	DUDE, WHERE'S MYCAR
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	WHIPPED
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	LITTLE NICKY
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FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
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EASTERN	
MAXIM	BOOBA
MIRAMAR	BUHAY NA MANEQUIN/ 100 GIRLS
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ODEON-2	WHIPPED
ROBEN	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
TANDEM-1	SPIRIT WARRIORS
TANDEM-2	NAGHUHUMIYAW
TIMES	URBAN LEGEND / BLESS THE CHILD
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	GATAS
ACT-2	ALINDOG NI BARBARA
ACT-3	TURN ON
ACT-4	PALIGAYAHIN MO AKO
CORONET-2	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
QUEZON-1	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
REMAR	BOOBA
REMAR-2	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
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OCEAN SUPERAMA	MALIKOT NA AGOS
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MANDALUYONG CITY	
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CINEMA-2	TANGING YAMAN
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CINEMA-5 (DTS)	THE 6TH DAY
CINEMA-6	BALAHIBONG PUSA
CINEMA-7	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
CINEMA-8	WHIPPED
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	RED PLANET
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIGHLANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?
CINEMA-12	LITTLE NICKY
CINEMA-14	MEET THE PARENTS
CINEMA-15	BOOBA
LORES	
CINEMA-2	HIGHLANDER
CINEMA-3	KANGKONG
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	RED PLANET
CINEMA-2	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?
CINEMA-3	MEET THE PARENTS
CINEMA-4	LITTLE NICKY
CINEMA-5	REMEMBER THE TITANS
CINEMA-6	PROOF OF LIFE

Stars came to celebrate Tadeco's golden year

CELEBRITIES led by popular actress and TV host Plinky Recto and singer-actress Isabel Granada were recently at the Tagum Agricultural Development Co. Inc. (Tadeco), one of the country's top banana exporters, as the company celebrated its 50th anniversary on Dec. 20.

The golden jubilee included a series of events such as the 1st Don Antonio Floirendo Sr.-Tadeco Charity Golf tournament, the Mutya ng Tadeco 2000, talent show and others.

Aside from Plinky and Isabel, other stars who performed at Tadeco during the year-long jubilee celebration were "Miss Saigon" star Ima Castro, Geneva Cruz, Calvin Millado, MTV VJ Shannen Torres, Criselda Volks, Yoyoy Villame, and comedienne Marissa Sanchez.

"We believe that more than just a business enterprise, Tadeco is a community," said a company statement.

In the past 50 years, the Floirendo-owned company helped in bringing prosperity to the people of Davao del Norte, particularly the town of Panabo. The company founders slowly and painstakingly built from what was once a swampland a banana plantation that now employs thousands of workers.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Star Movies' best bets for February

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THESE days, good movies are only a flick of your TV remote away. On Star Movies next month, these films are among the most promising (all screenings at 9 p.m.):

Feb. 1, Thursday, "The Thin Red Line:" About Army rifle company troops who change, suffer and discover something about themselves during a big World War Two battle.

Feb. 6, "The Horse Whisperer:" Love blossoms between a gentle horseman and a high-powered magazine editor. Stars include **Robert Redford** and **Kristin Scott Thomas**.

Feb. 8, "Robin:" Former intelligence agents band together to get a mysterious briefcase in this powerful action thriller starring **Robert de Niro, Jean Remo, Natasha McElhone** and **Sean Bean.**

Feb. 14, "A Midsummer Night's Dream:" **Shakespeare**'s comedy about two couples in love with the wrong partners, and how they finally find their true matches. Starring **Kevine Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer, Calista Flockhart** and **Rupert Everett.**

Feb. 20, "When A Man Loves A Woman:" An alcoholic mother of two struggles through drug rehabilitation in this emotionally powerful drama.

Feb. 22, "Blue Sky:" Oscar winner **Jessica Lange** stars in this dramatic film about a family that is transferred to a military base; and becomes part of a cover-up involving nuclear bomb tests.

Animation workshops

ARTFARM Asia Animation and Digital Exchange offers workshops in animation for the web, using Macromedia Flash 5. Call 535-0285.

Artfarm is located at the basement of Liberty Center, Shaw blvd., Mandaluyong City (look for McDonalds or Puregold).

Boob-tube booboos

HOST: How did you succeed as a producer? Share some of your secrets for the benefit of the young people who are listening.

Guest: There's no secret—it's all a product of a combination of time, hard work and *panahon*.

(Time *na, panahon pa*? *Tiyaga talaga* . . .)

* * *

Host: You look so refreshed! Did you take a long rest from your hectic schedule?

Starlet: Oh, yes. I've just come back from a long and deserving vacation in the States!

(Wow, deserving!)

* * *

Host: Have you been watching the impeachment trials on TV?

Cohost: Well, yes, just like everybody else.

Host: Is there anything you noticed about the witnesses?

Cohost: What do you mean?

Host: Didn't you notice, *ang mga* female witnesses, their hair, *lahat* naka-blowder?

(Blowder?— oh, blowdry!)

'The Yards'

MARK **Wahlberg**'s latest starrer, "The Yards," casts him as Leo, an ex-con who wants to mend his ways.

He takes a new job with his uncle (**James Caan**) and is reunited with his buddy (**Joaquin Phoenix**) and his uncle's business involves sabotage, high-stakes pay-offs and murder.

"The Yards" also stars **Faye Dunaway** and **Ellen Burstyn** as Leo's aunt and mother, respectively.

JAMIE Rivera poses with former President Corazon Aquino during the recent People Power 2 in Edsa.

Jaimie Rivera finds herself in history

BY LEAH SALTERIO

WHILE Virna Lisa's song "Magkaisa" soared during the historic 1986 People Power at Edsa, a new song filled the air in Edsa 2.

Jamie Rivera's "Heal Our Land," an inspirational tune especially written for the crisis, was adopted as the theme of the latest uprising. Jamie's brother Jun, an ex-seminarian who is her spiritual adviser, had suggested that the country needed a healing song in the midst of the political and economic crises.

"Heal Our Land" was written by Tom and Robin Brooks, who were inspired by this verse from the Bible: "If My people who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land."

The song was first heard during the Senate impeachment trial, where Jamie performed it live.

"We were thinking of an appropriate venue to launch the song," Jamie shares. "We thought the senators, being the leaders of our country, should be the first ones to hear it.

In the senate

"A friend of a friend of a friend told a staff member of Star Records that we should write a letter to Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, and it was approved. We gave CDs to all the senators and they liked the song."

"Heal Our Land" is the carrier track of Jamie's newest album from Star Records, "For Such a Time as This, Lord Heal Our Land." It's a compilation of inspirational and religious tracks which she earlier recorded — from "Emmanuel," the CD of the World Youth Day in Rome; from the soundtrack of Star Cinema's blockbuster "Tanging Yaman;" and from the Jubilee album.

Other tracks include "Awit ng Dakilang Jubileo," "I Believe," "Pananagutan," Kahanga-hanga," "Hesus na Aking Kapatid," "Aking Dasal" (the Tagalog version of the Andrea Bocceli-Celine Dion duet "The Prayer," which Jamie recorded with Robert Seña).

The CD also contains the pop hit "Love is All That Matters," which Jamie considers inspirational.

"Heal Our Land" the album was conceptualized by Jun Rivera and Fr. Carlo Magno Marcelo, the same tandem behind the successful Jubilee CD, also from Star Records.

"Everything was finalized only last December and it's amazing how things just fell into place, so we were able to release 'Heal Our Land' right away," Jamie asserts.

After the Senate, Jamie found herself on stage at the Edsa Shrine, where she sang "Heal Our Land" before a crowd of a million people.

The song resounded again at the historic site when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took her oath as the 14th president of the country.

In most Edsa video footage, TV stations use the song as background music. And "Heal Our Land" was endorsed by Cardinal Sin in all churches all over the country, where the song has become a choral piece.

Grateful and happy

"I'm very grateful and very happy at how people received the song," Jamie says. "It's good to be able to participate in People Power 2. I'm fortunate because people will also remember me through my song."

The day after the ouster of former President Estrada, Jamie

JAIMIE/ A20

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LITTLE NICKY 1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:55, 10:00	REMEMBER THE TITANS 1:45, 4:15, 6:45, 9:20	PROOF OF LIFE 11:40, 1:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

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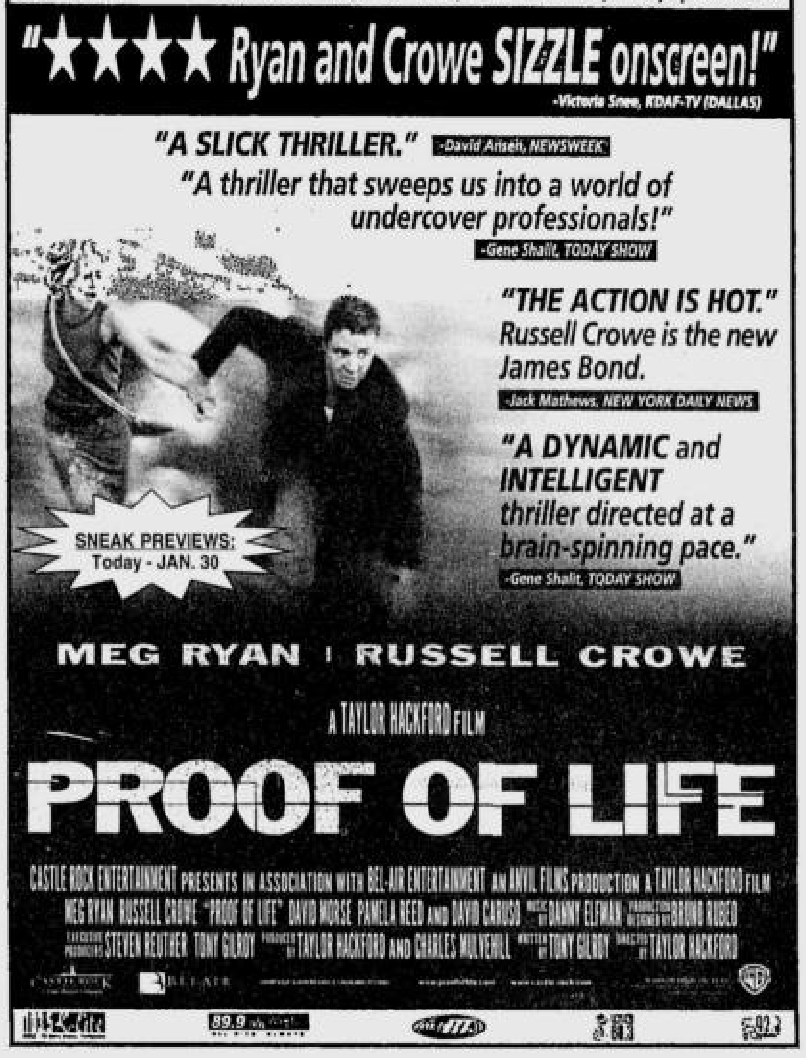
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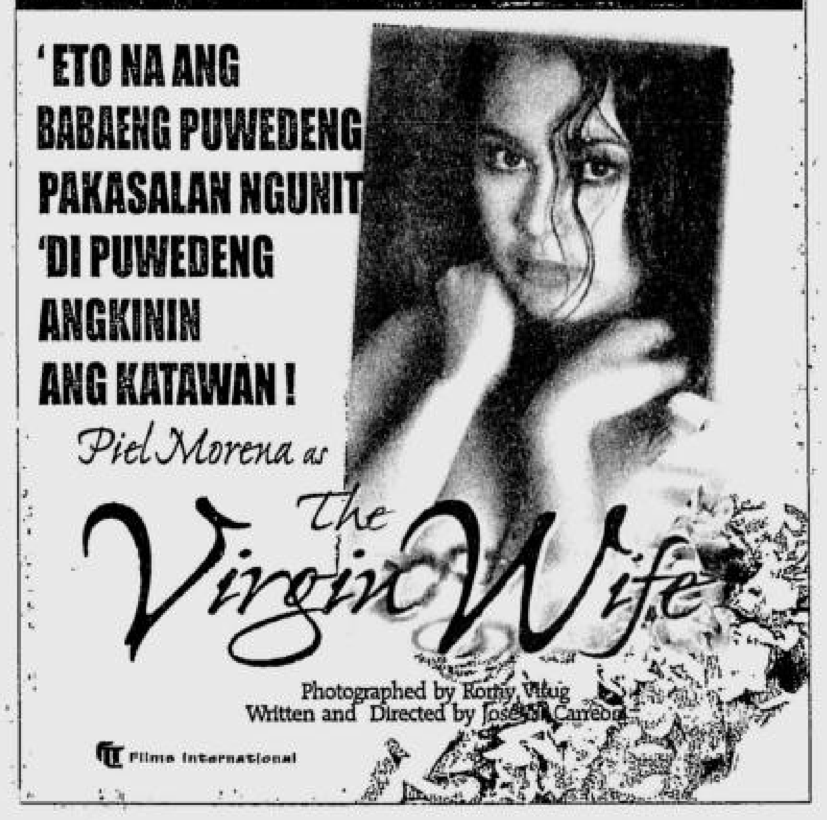
'ETO NA ANG BABAENG PUWEDENG PAKASALAN NGUNIT 'DI PUWEDENG ANGKININ ANG KATAWAN !
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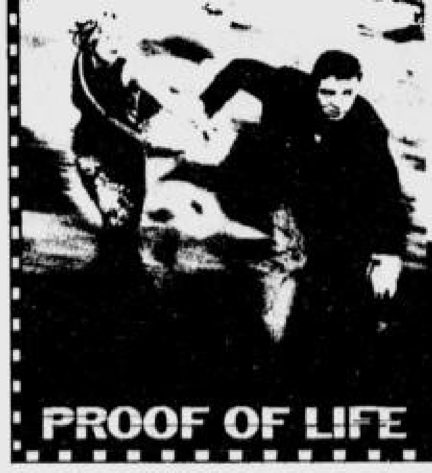
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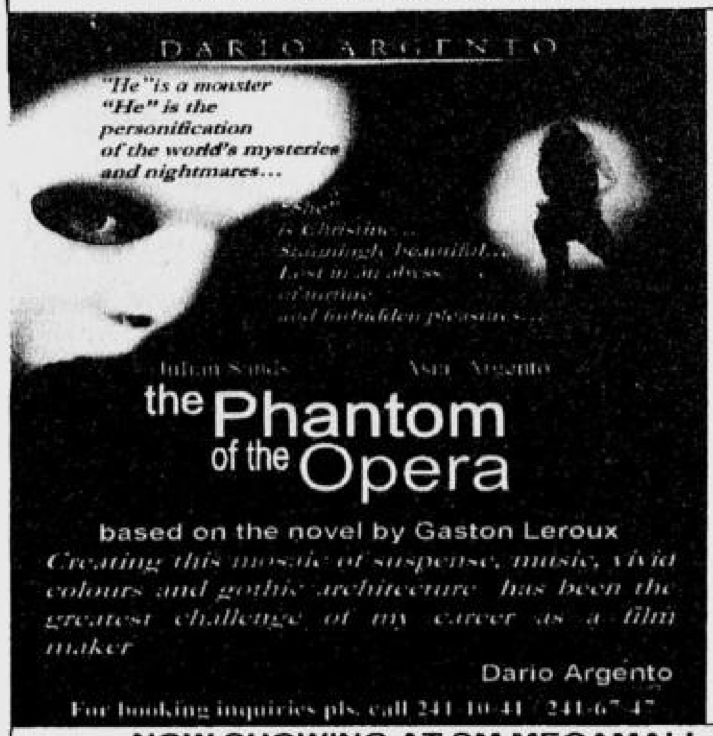
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SMC nears deal on buyback of Coke

SAN Miguel Corp., in partnership with Coca-Cola Co. of the US, has struck a pact with Coca-Cola Amatil Ltd. to buy the Australian company's Philippine business, the Australian Financial Review said.

The US company, Manila-based San Miguel and Amatil, based in Sydney, agreed on the price and the number of shares involved in the transaction, leaving only a few details to be ironed out, AFR said, without citing the source of its information.

Atlanta-based Coca-Cola may reveal the sale in the United States on Wednesday when it announces full-year earnings, AFR said.

However, Reuters said its market sources in Sydney noted that parties to the sale talks have substantial ground to cover before striking an agreement in principle, although sources in Manila suggested a deal may be just a few days from completion.

The AFR reported that details of an agreement in principle could be announced later this week.

"We've got no comment on the timing or the content," C-C Amatil spokesman Ian Brown said. "Negotiations have not been finalized."

Preliminary details showed that San Miguel and Coke would give up their Amatil shares and take on debt in a $1.1-billion transaction for the unit, AFR said. San Miguel will end up with 65 percent of the Philippine business, while Coca-Cola will control 35 percent.

The companies agreed to value the Philippine unit at $1.2 billion, equivalent to its book value.

The new pact would come amid a revival of investor confidence in the Philippines after the peaceful ouster of President Estrada, who was blamed by many analysts for dragging economic growth by fostering a climate of corruption. Estrada was forced out of Malacañang last Jan. 20 after the military backed mounting protests to his regime.

Amatil, 37-percent owned by Coca-Cola and 21.5-percent owned by San Miguel, rejected a joint offer from the two companies in early October. Amatil turned down the offer, which would have included businesses in Indonesia and Korea as well as the Philippines, because it wasn't willing to give up businesses that may yet rebound, analysts said.

Coca-Cola Amatil may also acquire a minority interest in San Miguel unit La Tondeña Distillers Inc., the Philippines' biggest liquor maker.

C-C Amatil said last month it was in talks with Coca-Cola and San Miguel on their possible acquisition of the underperforming Philippine soft drink-bottling business.

Atlanta-based soft drink giant Coca-Cola owns 37 percent of C-C Amatil and Philippine brewer San Miguel holds 21.5 percent.

C-C Amatil chief executive David Kennedy said in mid-December he expected the matter to be resolved within two months.

San Miguel has said it wanted to expand in the region and is considering resuming control of Philippines-based Coca-Cola Bottlers, which it sold to C-C Amatil in 1997 in return for a stake in the company.

Bloomberg, Reuters

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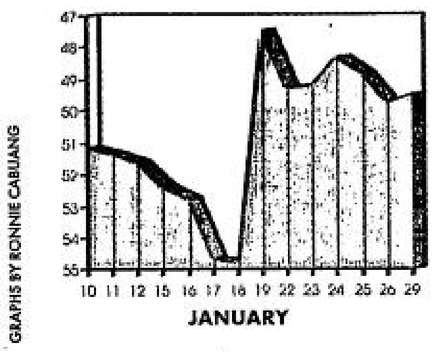

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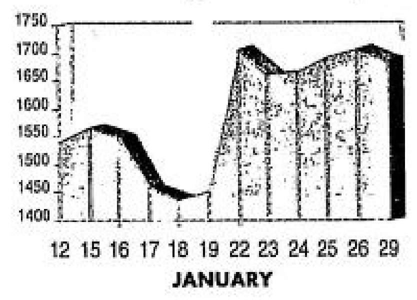


(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close lower

SHARES closed lower yesterday as investors cashed in on huge gains in recent sessions, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 21.90 points, or 1.3 percent, to 1686.26, after rising 0.9 percent Friday.

The index gained 18 percent last week, as investors cheered the bloodless revolt that ousted President Estrada, who was replaced by his vice president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The strength of the profit taking in some stocks was a bit surprising," said Edison Yap, fund manager for Equitable PCI Bank. "We're a bit worried that foreign buying has become very selective."

Persistent rumors of military coup plans against the new administration may have fanned market jitters, traders said. Reports of a military coup have been denied by Macapagal and the top brass of the Armed Forces.

Traders said a possible 0.25 percentage point cut in key US interest rates this week could help fan interest in shares in coming sessions.

Lower interest rates help bring down corporate borrowing costs and shift investment from fixed income instruments to equities and other investments. *AP*

ABS-CBN shelves project

LOPEZ-controlled multimedia giant ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has shelved plans to build a multibillion-peso integrated studio complex project similar to the Universal Studios in Hollywood as it braces for a continuing difficult economic environment this year.

ABS-CBN chair and CEO Eugenio Lopez III told reporters yesterday that despite the political crisis last year, however, the company was able to attain its full-year target of P2.3 billion in net income.

For this year, Lopez said the company was expecting a flat or single-digit growth, at the most.

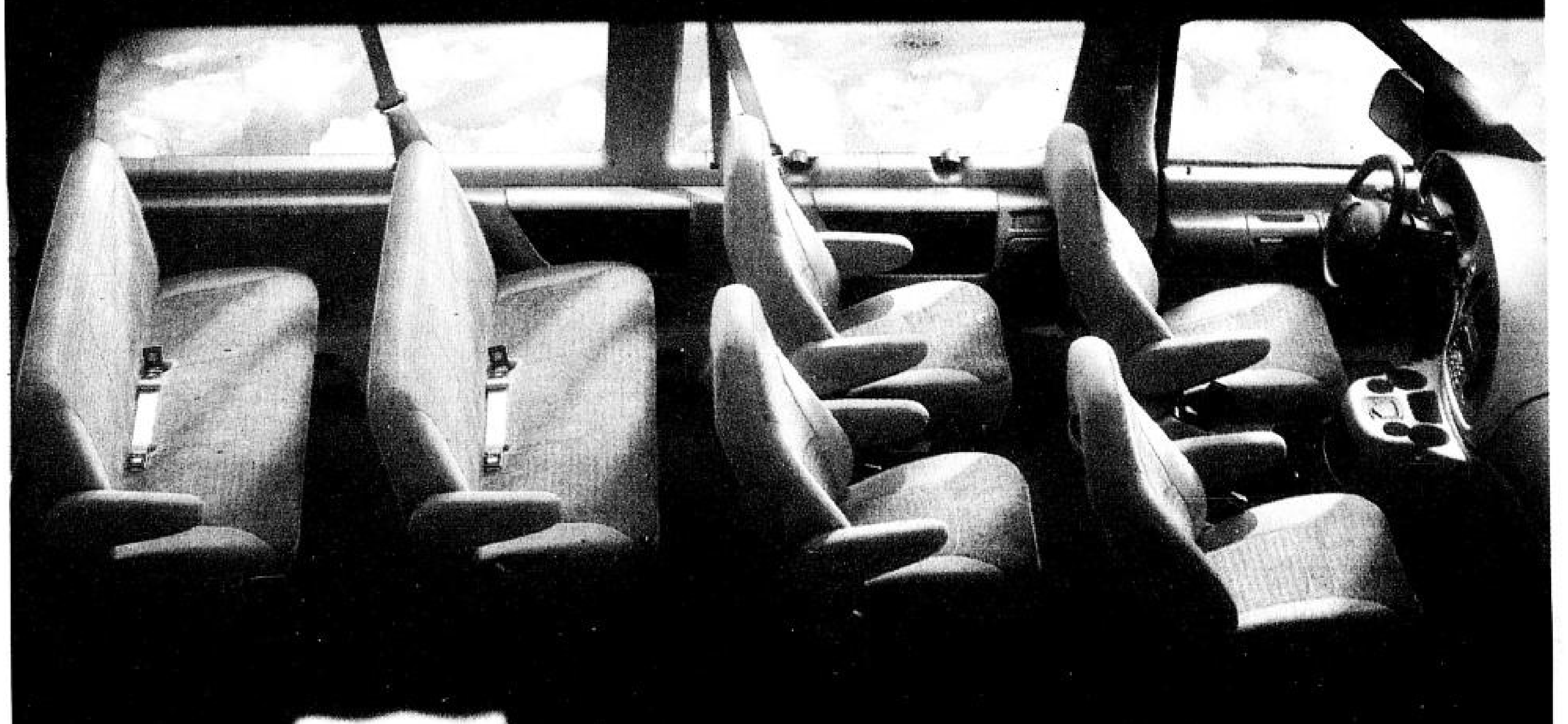
"It would take us a while to recover from what happened. Besides, consumer companies are not spending that much in advertising," he said.

The ABS-CBN chief also explained that the company would have to put in the back burner its plan to establish a backlot project to accommodate fast-growing demand in production facilities.

As of last year, ABS-CBN was producing 16 daily shows on remote locations at the cost of around P100 million a year. The backlot project was intended to consolidate shooting locations in one single complex and generate savings for the company.

At the same time, he said the project, which could include a theme park and a shopping mall complex, would provide a fresh money-making opportunity for the multimedia giant.

Meanwhile, Lopez said ABS-CBN was not inclined to change its advertising rates to increase sales volume.



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All vets are off

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

JUST because we have a newly installed administration under Gloriaetta, it doesn't mean all bets are off. No, far from it, we don't forget our stakes abroad just like that. If we do, it's the surest way to drive away foreign investors. Then, nothing actually changed.

And I thought we were ready to commit murder for the sake of foreign investments! Precisely, big business got tired of Joseph Ejercito Estrada and sent him home, only to become a "former" President with full dishonor, plus no retirement pay, partly because he was scaring the living daylights out of foreign investors.

Gloriaetta tends to do the same thing. Last week, she raised not just a few eyebrows in business. She decided to drop a long-pending bill in Congress. Oh, it only contained a package of wide-ranging reforms for the power sector.

Unfortunately, we used the same bill as a wager with a big cash dispenser known as the World Bank. The bet goes this way: If the reform bill passes Congress, we win from the World Bank a soft loan of about $1 billion. Believe me, the Gloriaetta administration can use it even just for pocket money.

* * *

IT SEEMS Gloriaetta is not keen on pushing for the power sector bill in Congress, despite the claim of her supporters there that they are now the majority. She said it can cost some P10 billion. Her administration is not exactly awash with cash at the moment.

You see, the administration of the man named Band . . . Wrist Band . . . left behind P70 billion in unpaid bills. Moreover, the budget deficit last year amounted to P120 billion. How could the new administration afford P10 billion?

Of course her allies in the ruling party Lakas are keeping quiet. All veterans of the Lakas party of Kuya Eddie, they are not saying that they, in turn, left off in 1998 with unpaid bills of more than P200 billion.

They would not say that some P60 billion of those unpaid bills were even contested by the then newly elected Wrist Band administration. Meaning, the government did not have anything to show for the bills. Not even used underwears.

* * *

PRECISELY, the $1-billion soft loan from the World Bank, which is equivalent to roughly P50 billion today, is designed to make the pain from doing reforms more bearable. Tell me, what reforms do not entail costs?

So somebody please whisper to Gloriaetta that the cost of the bill, if we really want reforms in the power sector, cannot really be avoided. In fact, the bill was delayed because Congress could not agree on who should shoulder what part of the costs.

The question now is, who the hell is giving Gloriaetta advice on the power sector? She has no energy secretary as yet. Word goes around that another veteran of Kuya Eddie's administration is lobbying hard for the position.

It's the same Lakas veteran who engineered many deals in the power sector during the time of Kuya Eddie. Not the least of them are some expensive contracts, which precisely make the reforms hard to do today. And that's Gloriaetta's recycled prospect?

* * *

DON'T look now but the group of former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu may yet get back their stake in United Overseas Bank Philippines, the former Westmont Bank, which was acquired by UOB of Singapore.

The Espiritu group is about to file a case against UOB which seeks to negate the sale of their shares to the Singaporean bank. Oh, it's a flimsy reason. The Espiritu group is whining that the Singaporean bank have not yet paid them. *Yun lang pala!*

Under the agreement between the two groups, UOB promised to pay the stockholders of Westmont some P1.4 billion. The money would be taken out of the collection from existing loans of Westmont.

Up to this day, according to the Espiritu group, not a single centavo was ever remitted to them by UOB Philippines. Why? Well, the bank kept on pointing at the Bangko Sentral. It said that the Bangko Sentral told UOB not to pay up.

* * *

IT TURNS out, however, that the Bangko Sentral actually told UOB Philippines to seek a compromise with the Westmont stockholders. The Bangko Sentral wanted to settle the dispute quietly, without court cases and all that if-your-honor-please stuff.

Maybe the Bangko Sentral feared that a court case between UOB, a foreign bank, and the Espiritu group, whose leader testified against Wrist Band in the impeachment case, could add to the tension in banking. For one, there was Equitable PCI Bank.

Initially, the bank said it coughed off only P2.5 billion in deposits in the "run," thanks to the impeachment case of Wrist Band. The figure was then revised to P20 billion. Word in banking is, it was more like P70 billion.

But I heard the bank is getting back the deposits slowly. Me, I was not one of those who panicked. While many others were taking money out of the bank, records would show I was depositing!

Okay, I had to pay a loan out of the deposit, and if I was late, the bank would not hesitate to sue me. Still, it didn't mean I couldn't trust the bank. Banks as a rule may be heartless, but you can still trust some of them.

Megaworld taps PentaCapital to study options on BW stake

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

PREMIER property developer Megaworld Corp. has tapped investment house PentaCapital Investment Corp. to evaluate its options on its 72.72-percent stake in controversial gaming firm Fairmont Holdings Inc., formerly BW Resources Corp.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Megaworld spokesperson Francis Canito said Pentacapital would lead an advisory team that would conduct financial and legal due-diligence on Fairmont to determine its course of action on the company.

"The PentaCapital advisory team will look at the financial condition of Fairmont, its assets and liabilities, and recommend to us whether or not the company can be turned into a vehicle for profitable operations and whether or not it can offer increased value to both Fairmont and Megaworld shareholders," Canuto said.

Canuto noted that PentaCapital was a leading player in the investment banking and financial services sector and specializes in catering to clients engaged in real estate, leisure, tourism and infrastructure businesses.

Analysts believe that Megaworld had no choice but to take over the management of Fairmont and turn it into a real estate company now that shareholder Dante Tan, identified as an Estrada crony, is out of the picture following the recent change in the country's political leadership.

A Megaworld insider, however, said that a potential issue might arise since certain conservative members of the board of the property firm are not keen on having Megaworld involved in gaming operations.

In a recent report, Keppel Securities said: "With the issue of price manipulation that beleaguered BW share price, we think that Megaworld would find difficulty divesting its stake. Instead, what will be definite for BW is that Adrew Tan will take over the management and will transform the company from a gaming firm to a property company."

Keppel said the flagship project of BW, the Sheraton Marina Hotel which was supposed to house the casino operation of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., would now be likely converted into office and condominium spaces.

"Upon completion of the project, this will complement Megaworld's office and condominium rental revenues," Keppel Securities said.

While the hotel project has yet to get off the ground, Megaworld's serviced apartment building is nearing completion and could take the place of the much-delayed Sheraton hotel by being converted into a condotel.

The infusion of Dante Tan's Best World Gaming and Entertainment Corp.'s bingo operations into the company was originally intended to dilute Megaworld's exposure in BW.

Megaworld acquired 1.2 billion shares of BW as part of an asset-for-share swap involving the transfer of the company's Malate property, which will be the site of the Sheraton Marina Complex. Andrew Tan had intended to be a passive investor in the company. The shares, however, were locked up for a period of one year and were released only last week.

Megaworld's exposure to BW represented only around 3 percent of its total assets. Thus, the company is confident that any sharp drop in BW shares would not have a material impact on its total asset portfolio.

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Schedule: February 21-23 (from 1:00p.m.-6:00p.m.)

Venue: CMDF Seminar Room
6th Floor Prudential Bank Building
2182 Pasong Tamo St., Makati City

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Tel Nos: 815-1151 Telefax No. 815-1152
website mydestiny.net/~cmdf
e-mail cmdf_bdd@mydestiny.net

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EEI CORPORATION
1931

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that a Special Stockholders' Meeting of EEI Corporation will be held at the Club Filipino, McKinley corner Eisenhower Streets, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila on February 01, 2001 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning to take up the proposed merger of EEI Corporation and Philrock, Inc., with EEI Corporation as the surviving corporation, and to transact such other business as may properly be brought up during the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

The proposed merger is expected to result in economies of scale, improved efficiencies, more productive use of the properties of the constituent corporations, and other benefits.

The Board of Directors has fixed the close of business on December 30, 2000 as the record date for purposes of determining the Company's stockholders entitled to notice of and vote at the said meeting.

Stockholders who cannot attend the meeting are requested to accomplish the proxy forms which have been mailed to them together with the Agenda and Proxy Statement, and return the same to us not later than 24 hours before the meeting.

(Sgd.) FERDINAND G. VILLAFUERTE
Sr. Vice President & Corporate Secretary

MONITORING VEHICLES INCREASES EFFICIENCY

Repeat orders prove the system works.
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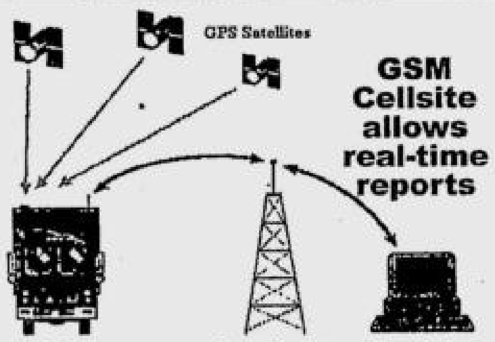

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Tel.: (+632) 374-1722; 374-1733
E-Mail: tricorp@info.com.ph

Inquiries in Cebu, Please call
LE Technology at (+032) 231-7280 to 84

DISCLOSURES

DELFIN Lazaro was appointed as CEO and president of **iAyala Co. Inc.** effective Feb. 1.

* * *

THE LISTING of **ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.**'s 40,000 PDRs as represented by PDR Certificate No. 826 is set today. This brings the number of PDRs listed arising from the exchange of the said amount of shares to a total of 267.766 million PDRs.

* * *

OMICO Corp. announced with deepest regret the untimely demise of its president Roman Cruz on Jan. 23. The board elected Tommy Kin Hing Tia to succeed him and appointed Juana Lourdes Buyson to act as treasurer.

* * *

SANITARY Wares Manufacturing Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 14, 8 a.m., at the Shangri-La Hotel, Makati.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. bought five million of its class B shares at P61,50 per share and another 73.43 million of its class B shares at P61 per shares as part of its share repurchase program.

* * *

THE BOARD of **iVantage Corp.** authorized the issuance of 376.79 million iVantage shares at P1 per share in favor of **Pacific Asia Capital Corp.**, a duly registered investment house in exchange for the IT shares.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.** accepted the resignation of board member Manuel Tan Kian See and treasurer Juanita Tan. Lawyers Brigido Dulay and Alejandro Saulog were elected as their replacements to the board while assistant treasurer Rolando Castro was elected as treasurer. Mariza Santos-Tan was elected as assistant treasurer to replace Castro.

* * *

LAMBERTO Villena was elected to the board of **Vitarich Corp.** in lieu of Jose Acetre. ***Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research***

Philippine Stock Exchange

(AsofMonday,January29,2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS&FINANCIALSERVICES					
BANKS					
BankofthePhil.Islands	72.50	74	72.5	73	342,800
EquitablePCIBankInc.	58.00	58	57	57	90,900
FirstE-BankCorp.	2.00	2	2	2	2,000
MetropolitanBank&Trust	240.0	240	237	238	27,630
PrudentialBank	470.0	470	470	470	3,000
PhilippineNationalBank	31.50	33	29.5	29.5	867,200
RizalComm'lBkg.Corp."A"	27.00	27	27	27	1,000
UnionBankofthePhil.	32.00	32	32	32	1,700
FINANCIALSERVICE					
BankardInc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.74	238,000
FirstMetroInvest.Corp.	250.0	250	250	250	200
ManulifeFinancialCorp.	1350	1365	1350	1365	7,020
PCILeasing&Fin.Inc.	1.30	1.3	1.3	1.3	3,000
SunLifeFinancialServ.	1115	1145	1115	1145	23,940
COMMERCIAL&INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBNBroadcastingCorp.	49.50	49.5	48.5	48.5	11,000
DiversifiedFin.Network	9.70	9.7	9.7	9.7	5,000
DigitalTelecomPhils.Inc.	.7100	.72	.67	.67	4,520,000
GlobeTelecomInc.	760.0	760	750	750	5,620
IslandInfoandTechInc.	.0700	.075	.07	.07	29,100,000
LibertyTelecomsHoldings	.4700	.47	.45	.45	150,000
Piltel	.7100	.72	.71	.72	420,000
Phil.Telegraph&Tel.Co.	.4200	.45	.41	.45	150,000
Phil.LongDisTelCo.	925.0	925	910	920	73,340
IvantageCorp.	1.18	1.2	1.12	1.14	4,843,000
Philweb.comInc.	.0825	.095	.0825	.0925	825,000,000
POWER&ENERGY					
ManilaElectricCo."A"	56.00	57	56	56	14,100
ManilaElectricCo."B"	61.00	62	58	58	2,659,500
PetronCorp.	2.08	2.1	1.92	1.92	22,975,000
Trans-AsiaOilandEnergy	.9900	.99	.99	.99	10,000
TRANSPORTATIONSERVICES					
AsianTerminalsInc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	100,000
Int'lContainerTerm'lSV	1.38	1.44	1.24	1.24	18,204,000
KeppelPhils.MarineInc.	.5100	.58	.51	.58	50,000
LorenzoShippingCorp.	.4000	.4	.4	.4	150,000
CONSTRUCTION&OTHERRELATEDPRODUCTS					
AlsonsCementCorp.	.2400	.24	.24	.24	50,000
EngineeringEquip.Inc.	.5900	.62	.58	.6	5,010,000
RepublicGlassHldg.Corp.	.8100	.81	.8	.81	330,000
UnionCementCorp.	.7000	.7	.69	.7	1,020,000
FOOD,BEVERAGES&TOBACCO					
AlaskaMilkCorp.	2.30	2.4	2.3	2.4	85,000
CosmosBottlingCorp.	2.70	2.7	2.6	2.7	10,275,000
JollibeeFoodsCorp.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	642,600
LaTondeñaDistillersInc.	36.00	36	33.5	33.5	375,400
PancakeHouseInc.	1.60	1.6	1.6	1.6	11,000
RFMCorp.	1.02	1.06	1	1	3,800,000
SwiftFoodInc.	1.00	1	1	1	50,000
SanMiguelCorp."A"	50.00	50	49	50	155,800
SanMiguelCorp."B"	60.00	60.5	60	60.5	177,000
VitarichCorp.	.4600	.47	.45	.47	250,000
HOLDINGFIRMS					
AbacusConRes&Hdg"A"	.5700	.68	.57	.62	1,250,000
AbacusConRes&HdgB	.6000	.65	.6	.65	20,000
AyalaCorp.	8.40	8.4	8.3	8.4	2,570,000
AboitizEquityVentures	1.64	1.7	1.62	1.62	978,000
AllianceGlobalGroupInc.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.5	7,000
Ajo.NetHoldingsInc.	1.26	1.3	1.2	1.22	1,627,000
A.SorianoCorp.	.3300	.33	.33	.33	170,000
AlcornGoldRes.Corp.	.0060	.006	.006	.006	13,000,000
ATNHoldingsInc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	11,000
BaguioGoldHoldingsCorp.	2.00	2	2	2	35,000
BacnotanCons.Indus.Inc.	12.00	12	12	12	1,000
BenpresHoldingsCorp.	3.15	3.15	3.05	3.05	5,133,000
BasicConsolidatedInc.	.2000	.22	.2	.2	2,170,000
CrownEquitiesInc.	.3200	.32	.31	.31	800,000
SoutheastAsianCement	.2500	.25	.25	.25	570,000
DMCIHoldingsInc.	.6000	.67	.6	.61	8,070,000
EbecomHoldingsInc.	.2200	.22	.185	.185	7,800,000
Ever-GotescoResources	.0600	.06	.0575	.0575	1,900,000
FilinvestDev.Corp.	1.38	1.46	1.3	1.3	16,440,000
FirstPhil.Hldgs.Corp.	25.00	25	23.75	23.75	104,200
ForumPacificInc.	.3300	.34	.33	.34	300,000
GlobalEquitiesInc.	.4200	.42	.4	.4	1,470,000
IonicsInc.	15.00	15	15	15	800
J.G.SummitHoldingsInc.	2.60	2.7	2.6	2.65	5,676,000
MacroasiaCorp.	2.30	2.3	2.3	2.3	9,000
MarsteelCons.Inc."A"	.0220	.022	.021	.021	16,300,000
MarsteelCons.Inc."B"	.0220	.022	.022	.022	1,000,000
MegaworldCorp.	1.08	1.12	1	1	48,535,000
MetroPacificCorp.	.7400	.77	.7	.7	16,120,000
SolidGroupInc.	.8000	.86	.78	.78	10,880,000
TanduayHoldingsInc.	7.50	7.5	7.5	7.5	1,000
UnioilRes.&HoldingsCo.	.2000	.2	.2	.2	30,000
UniwideHoldingsInc.	.4200	.45	.41	.42	13,130,000
WellexIndustriesInc.	.4000	.47	.4	.47	90,000
WaterfrontPhils.Inc.	.3800	.45	.38	.41	8,750,000
MANUFACTURING,DISTRIBUTION&TRADING					
ABrownCompanyInc.	.7500	.75	.72	.72	200,000
Corro-CoatInc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	5,000
MacondrayPlasticsInc.	6.20	6.5	6.2	6.5	30,000
MusicCorp.	3.65	3.65	3.3	3.3	510,000
MabuhayVinylCorp.	.6200	.62	.62	.62	20,000
PicopResourcesInc.	.1600	.16	.15	.15	5,470,000
CentralAzucarDonPedro	.9500	.95	.95	.95	100,000
SPITechnologiesInc.	10.25	10.25	9.9	10.25	491,000
StenielManufacturing	.5900	.61	.59	.61	150,000
HOTEL,RECREATION&OTHERSERVICE					
BelleCorp.	.7800	.83	.77	.78	9,590,000
FairmontHoldingsInc.	.8900	.95	.79	.81	28,600,000
Leisure&ResortsCorp.	.6500	.69	.62	.63	14,160,000
PremiereEnt.Prod.Inc.	.4100	.45	.41	.43	1,080,000
BONDS,PREFERRED&WARRANTS					
ABS-CBNHldgs.Corp.(PDR)	49.00	49	48.5	48.5	79,200
EquitablePCIBank-War	3.85	3.9	3.7	3.7	165,000
GlobeTelecomHldg.(PDR)	775.0	775	775	775	800
JollibeeWarrants	11.00	11	11	11	14,900
OmicoCorp.Warrant	.0038	.0042	.0036	.0036	282,000,000
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesQ	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesR	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesS	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	600
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesT	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,600
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesU	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesV	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesW	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesY	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT(10%Pref)SeriesZ	10.50	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WaterfrontPhils.-Warrant	.0800	.15	.08	.14	600,000
PROPERTY					
AyalaLandInc.	6.90	7	6.8	6.9	41,343,000
AranetaPropertiesInc.	.5300	.53	.46	.46	260,000
CebuHoldingsInc.	.4800	.49	.45	.45	1,010,000
C&PHomesInc.	.4000	.42	.37	.37	32,300,000
CyberBayCorp.	.5500	.56	.54	.54	1,340,000
EmpireEastLandInc.	.5200	.54	.5	.5	23,880,000
FilinvestLandInc.	2.85	3.05	2.85	2.85	60,559,000
GotescoLandInc.	.0500	.05	.05	.05	100,000
KeppelPhils.Prop.Inc.	.8500	1	.85	1	50,000
KuokPhil.Properties	.2000	.22	.2	.21	1,450,000
Fil-EstateLandInc.	.5500	.56	.53	.53	830,000
MRCAlliedInd.Inc.	.5600	.56	.5	.5	200,000
PhilippineEstatesCorp.	.1900	.2	.17	.17	1,240,000
RobinsonsLandCorp.	2.20	2.3	2.2	2.2	134,000
SMPrimeHoldingsInc.	6.90	6.9	6.7	6.7	3,397,000
UniversalRightfieldProp.	.1450	.15	.135	.14	16,390,000
MINING					
ApexMiningCo.Inc."A"	.0075	.008	.0075	.0075	42,000,000
ApexMiningCo.Inc."B"	.0075	.0085	.0075	.008	34,000,000
AtlasCons.Min.&Dev't.	1.34	1.5	1.34	1.5	24,000
DizonCopperSilverMines	3.15	3.15	3	3	6,000
Itogon-SuyocMines"A"	.0230	.023	.022	.023	16,200,000
LepantoCons.Mng.Co."A"	.2000	.2	.2	.2	170,000
LepantoCons.Mng.Co."B"	.2300	.23	.23	.23	400,000
ManilaMiningCorp."A"	.0070	.007	.007	.007	18,000,000
ManilaMiningCorp."B"	.0070	.007	.007	.007	20,000,000
OmicoCorp.	.0055	.0055	.005	.0055	314,000,000
PolarMines&Dev't.Corp.	.0240	.024	.023	.023	5,000,000
PhilexMiningCorp."B"	.2600	.26	.245	.245	350,000
UnitedParagonMiningCo.	.2000	.2	.2	.2	150,000
OIL					
ImperialRes.	.0370	.037	.035	.035	12,400,000
OrientalPet.&Min."A"	.0065	.0065	.006	.006	79,000,000
OrientalPet.&Min."B"	.0065	.0065	.006	.006	58,000,000
Pacifica	.0220	.024	.021	.021	100,000,000
SinophilCorp.	.1300	.135	.12	.12	5,330,000
VulcanInd'l.	.2800	.3	.28	.3	980,000

CURRENCIES

Jan. 29, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.082368	1.000000	49.3210
Japan	Yen	0.009227	0.008525	0.4205
United Kingdom	Pound	1.581989	1.461600	72.0876
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.138776	0.128215	6.3237
Switzerland	Franc	0.654949	0.605107	29.8445
Canada	Dollar	0.719755	0.664982	32.7976
Singapore	Dollar	0.618956	0.571853	28.2044
Australia	Dollar	0.587956	0.543213	26.7918
Bahrain	Dinar	2.871156	2.652661	130.8319
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.288593	0.266631	13.1505
Brunei	Dollar	0.619700	0.572541	28.2383
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000115	0.000106	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.025300	0.023375	1.1529
UAE	Dirham	0.294715	0.272287	13.4295
Korea	Won	0.000845	0.000781	0.0385
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.923900	45.5677
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.472383	23.2984
France	Franc	0.152450	0.140848	6.9468
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.419248	20.6777
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.067142	3.3115
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022903	1.1296
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000477	0.0235
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.155389	7.6639
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004608	0.2273
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005553	0.2739
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022903	1.1296
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.173111	57.8590

T-bill yields fall on rate cut hopes

THE COUNTRY'S benchmark yield dropped for the 11th straight week as investors bought bills on expectations that interest rates will decline.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has lowered its overnight borrowing rates six times since December and may be encouraged to reduce more if the US Federal Reserve reduces its rates as expected this week.

At yesterday's Bureau of Treasury auction, the average yield on the 91-day bill, which banks use to set lending rates, fell to 11.165 percent from 11.760 percent last week.

"The market expects about a 25 basis-point cut in US rates," said Teresa Marcial, assistant vice president at BPI Asset Management in Manila. "We believe this may push through, giving the Bangko Sentral more room to reduce rates to pre-October levels."

The yield is at its lowest level since October, when the BSP raised its rates by four percentage points to support the peso as corruption charges were leveled against then-President Joseph Estrada.

In other government securities, the 182-day bill yield fell to 12.181 percent from 12.556 percent, and the 364-day bill yield fell to 12.699 percent from 13.136 percent. Investors bought the entire P4 billion worth of bills for sale and bid for as much as P14.26 billion in bonds.

"The offers have really gone down, most players are going to the auction for better rates," dealers said.

The central bank lowered its key overnight rates by 50 basis points effective today, bringing its overnight borrowing rate at 12 percent and its lending rate at 14.25 percent.

But the central bank also acknowledged last week the need to consider interest rate differentials with the United States to encourage investments.

The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to reduce its key interest rates by 50 basis points when it meets for two days starting Tuesday.

In the interbank market, the call loan rate eased to 12 1/16 percent from 12 9/16 percent. Volume jumped to P24.872 billion from P9.870 billion, with 27 lenders and 18 borrowers. *Bloomberg, Reuters*

Oil firms set price increase in two weeks

LOCAL oil firms are set to raise their prices in the next two weeks to cover for rising world crude prices.

Officials of the country's "Big Three" oil refiners—Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc.—said the peso's recent gains against the dollar would not offset higher petroleum prices abroad.

They said world crude prices had been rising since oil-producing countries decided to cut production effective Feb. 1.

Opec ministers agreed to reduce output by 1.5 million barrels per day, just over 5 percent, to underpin crude prices at $25 per barrel.

Officials of Petron, Pilipinas Shell and Caltex said they expected OPEC's production cut to jack up the price of Dubai crude, which had moved up to $22.07 per barrel as of Jan. 16 from $21.65 per barrel last month, Philippine Institute of Petroleum Inc. executive director Reynaldo Marquez said in a separate interview that Opec's target to maintain prices at $25 to $26 per barrel would definitely raise local pump prices.

"The recent decline of international crude prices to a low of $19 per barrel had forced Opec to mull a cutback of some 1.5 million to two million barrels from its daily production. If this happens, the second phase of the rollback may not be possible. We should also monitor the peso deterioration," Marquez said.

Petron, Shell and Caltex cut gasoline prices this month by 60 centavos per liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos per liter.

New oil players Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. and Total Petroleum Philippines Inc. also reduced their prices, with Unioil slashing gasoline prices by 52 centavos and diesel prices by 42 centavos and Total cutting gasoline prices by 60 centavos and diesel prices by 50 centavos.

MMPC clarifies position on Benz dealership in RP

THE TAKEOVER of Japanese vehicle maker Mitsubishi by DaimlerChrysler has caused a ripple among local assemblers and dealers particularly over the exclusive dealership of Mercedes Benz vehicles in the country.

Last week, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. first vice president for marketing Melchor S. Dizon hinted that the company would eventually sell Mercedes luxury cars and sport utility vehicles alongside its Lancers, Galants and Pajeros.

Dizon noted that the German-American carmaker had said that it bought into Mitsubishi Japan because it was keen on using Mitsubishi's extensive distribution network in Asia to sell Mercedes.

Mitsubishi Philippines is 51-percent owned by Mitsubishi Japan and 49 percent by Nissho Iwai of Japan. DaimlerChrysler bought 34 percent of Mitsubishi Japan, which Dizon explained had given the German-American vehicle maker the control of the merged company.

Daimler-Chrysler is aggressively expanding in Asia and it is building smaller and more affordable vehicles to cater to this market.

But Commercial Motors Corp., the licensed distributor of Mercedes Benz vehicles in the country, is not taking this news lightly as it issued a statement denying that Mitsubishi Philippines would be taking over the local market.

CMC vice president for sales and marketing Charles Patrick Lee said his company has not received any directive from Mercedes South East Asia about possible changes in the distributorship agreement. Lee said its franchise to distribute Mercedes products was registered with the Board of Investments under the Car Development Program.

CMC assembles the Mercedes E240 model from completely knocked down packs with other models fully assembled from abroad. CMC sold a total of 167 Mercedes units last year.

But Dizon clarified that his company was not out to grab the Mercedes distributorship from CMC. Dizon stressed that Mitsubishi Philippines would take its cue on the Mercedes issue from its head office and that there was no definite plan as of yet for the Mercedes distributorship agreement. He added that he did not make any statement on CMC's agreement with the Daimler group because he was not privy to its terms. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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COUNTRY SHARES

As of January 30, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
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BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	800,000
CAMP JOHN HAY		350,000
CANYON WOODS	-	Please call
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	125,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS	200,000	215,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	380,000	400,000/500,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST	-	150,000
FANTASY WORLD	-	Please call
FONTANA D/C*/B**	90,000/120,000*	92,500/150,000/*280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	270,000	290,000/420,000*/450,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	400,000	415,000/625,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C (with lot)*	400,000	425,000/2.6 M*
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,500,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	800,000/850,000*	850,000
METROPOLITAN A/B*	160,000/160,000*	165,000
MIMOSA IND./CORP.*	200,000/350,000*	240,000/550,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	300,000/600,000**	330,000/425,000*
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PUERTO AZUL A/B*	-	130,000/Please call*
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	250,000
RIVIERA A/B*	280,000	310,000/420,000*
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*	-	130,000/150,000*
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*C**	-	275,000/350,000*/450,000**
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.	Please call	Please call
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TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS CC	495,000	500,000
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TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	850,000	880,000
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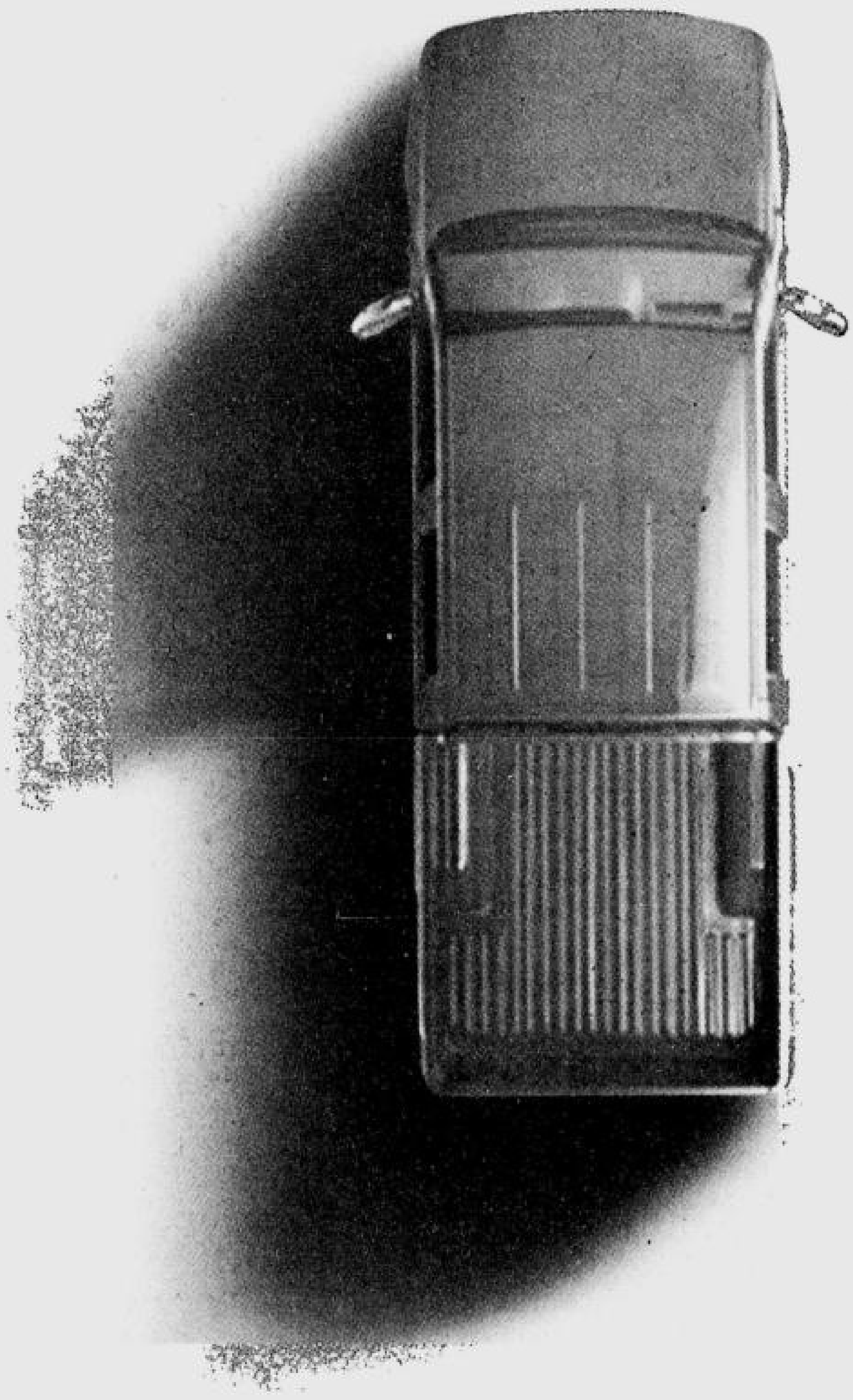

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"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life and I shall live in
the house of the Lord forever."
Psalm 23:6

LAURA C. MANZANA

Now peacefully rests in the infinite
Grace and Goodness of the Lord
on January 28, 2001 at the age of 76.

Her bereaved children **Rito** and **Guia**, Mayor **Sergio "Eyo" Manzana**, **Ninay** and **Charlie Villanueva**, **Posai** and **Chris Miller**; grandchildren **Regina** and **Rojit**, **Rita Myra**, **Richmond** and **Mikey**; brother, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Natividad Street, Pangil, Laguna.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 1, 2001 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Psalm 23

ENGR. BENJAMIN S. CASTILLO

(Ret.) DPWH Regional Director
September 1, 1932 -- January 26, 2001

His bereaved wife **ERLINDA LAREDO**; children **HIL** and **SOL GALLARDO**, **HERMIE** and **NOEL RABANAL**, and **VENER**; brother-in-law **ROMY** and wife **LETTY LAREDO**; niece **LIZETTE** and husband **BLAKE**; nephews **RAFFERTY** and **RYAN**; grandchildren **ALEKSA** and **BRENNAN G. CASTILLO**, **REGINE**, **ERWIN**, **REESE** and **DAPHNE C. RABANAL**; sisters-in-law **SIANANG** and **ANITA**; nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the **Multi-Purpose Hall, Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City**.

Interment will be on Saturday, 3 February 2001, 3 p.m. at the **ROMAN CATHOLIC CEMETERY, BATANGAS CITY**.

"I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are Yours."
John 17:9

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THE CAP FAMILY OF COMPANIES
announces with deep sorrow
the demise of
First Vice President

SABAS B. YABIS

who joined his Creator
on January 28, 2001.

He is survived by wife **Gina**; and children **Glei**, **Ging**, **Jason** and **Aaron**. His remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation shall take place on Friday, February 2, 2001.

The reader is requested to pray for the repose of his soul.

Ex-Mayor ANGILEO P. PAUIG

of Enrile, Cagayan

Peacefully joined his Creator
on Sunday, January 28, 2001, at the age of 97.

His loving wife **Adoracion** (†); children **Lourdes**, **Jonas** and **Dulce**, **Elena**, **Angeleo Jr.** (†) and **Norma**, **Wilhelmina** and **Pascual** (†), **Nicolas** and **Paula**, **Ex-Mayor Domingo** and **Vilma**; grandchildren **Jeng** and **Annalee**, **Daisy** and **Lito**, **Maricon** and **Arnel**, **Dolly**, **Joy**, **Egay**, **James** and **Cristy**, **Bong**, **Del**, **Mike** and **Gemma**, **Deanna**, **Ida**, **Jojo**, **Noli**, **Sheilla**, **Jay**, **Beng**, **Che**, **Paul**, **JR**, **Bambi**, **BJ**, **Apple** and **Ferdie**; great-grandchildren **Joel**, **Jeric**, **Axzel**, **Angel**, **Jonjon**, **Bruce**, and **Javier**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. His remains will be flown to Enrile, Cagayan on Wednesday, January 31, 2001. Interment will be on Saturday, February 3, 2001 at Enrile, Cagayan.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

"I am the resurrection and life; He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

OFELIA R. TANTOCO

June 20, 1931 - January 28, 2001

Her bereaved husband **Adriano G. Tantoco**; children **Bobby** and **Fatima, Jerry** and **Leila**; grandchildren **Adrian** and **Ophel**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Eternal Gardens, Baesa Caloocan City on Saturday, February 3, 2001 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

In Loving Memory of

Luisa "Lily" Roque de Leon

Peacefully joined our creator on January 28, 2001 at the age of 64.

Her beloved husband,
CALIXTO "JUN" JR.,
children, **DAVE** and **WING, HAZEL, CHUBBY, PONG** and **JENNY, CHINKIE, JENNIE, NI-ANNE, MICHAEL, JANET, PEACHES,**
Grandchildren, **TRICIA, RAYMOND, RYAN, LOUIE, KYLE, NINA, KENO, MIGUEL and CHESKA;** brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends mourn her passing and pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remain lie in state at the
St. John Bosco Faith Chapel Pasay Road, Makati City.

Cremation will be on **Thursday, February 1, 2001 at 12:00 noon** at **Loyola Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati** after the **9:00 am** mass.

"Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

Goodbye **Mama** and **Lengleng**. God has you in His keeping, but you will forever be in our hearts.

HELEN KO CALUPIG
ARLEN GRACE KO CALUPIG

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 21, 2001 at the age of 43 and 14.

Her bereaved husband/father **ARLITO**; son/brother **ANGELO**; father-in-law and mother-in-law/grandparents **ARIONG** and **MARINA**; sisters-in-law/aunts **HELEN** and **SUSAN**; brother-in-law/uncle **JUN**; nephews/cousins **AHRON** and **ANIEL**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of their souls.

Their remains lie in state at Funèraria Filipinas, along Zapote Road, Las Piñas City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 31, 2001, 10:00 a.m. at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque.

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

ESTRELLA D. BERMEJO

(1914 - 2001)

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 28, 2001.

Her late husband **Ramon Bermejo** (†); loving children and in-laws **Adelina** and **Conrado** (†), **Andresito** (†) and **Edelisa**, **Ramon Jr.** (†) and **Teresita, Ma. Fely** and **Capt. Ernesto Sr., Leticia, Renito** and **Merlyn, Nenita, Hermenigildo**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Avenue, Parañaque City.

Interment will be announced later.

WE LOVINGLY REMEMBER

the Fourth Death Anniversary of our beloved LOLO PARE

REV. FR. GREGORIO V. TORRES

who joined his Creator on January 30, 1997

Holy Masses for his eternal peace and happiness will be offered at the following churches today, January 30, 2001

1.	**St. Jerome the Parish Church,** Ayala-Alabang, Muntinlupa	6:00 AM
2.	**St. James Parish Church,** Ayala Alabang	6:00 AM
3.	**Sanctuario de Santo Cristo Parish Church,** San Juan, Metro Manila	7:30 AM
4.	**Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish Church,** Forbes Park, Makati City	6:00 AM
5.	**Sto. Tomas Aquinas Parish Church,** Sto. Tomas, Batangas	5:45 AM
6.	**Sto. Tomas Aquinas Parish Church,** Sto. Tomas, Batangas	6:30 AM
7.	**Christ The King,** Quezon City	7:00 AM

The family requests relatives, friends and pious readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

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SERGIO DEL BARRIO MENDOZA

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His bereaved wife **Leonila**; children and spouses **Sernila** and **Gilbert, Sergio Jr.** and **Eve, Julita** and **Nestor**; grandchildren **Katherine, Kirstie, Kayla** and **Pamela**; brothers, sisters, all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 702 M. Naval Street, Navotas, Metro Manila.

Cremation will be held at La Funeraria Paz Crematory on February 3, 2001 at 2:00 PM.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord." Matthew 10:39

Ma. MELANIE BERNARDO y LECHUGA

Died of leukemia on 27 January 2001 at the age of 43.

Her bereaved parents **Arsenio** and **Corazon**; twin sister **Meladie**; sisters and their spouses **Babes** and **Romy Cruz, Arlene** and **Alex Esposo, Girly** and **Omar Sagadal**; brother **Louelle**; nephews and niece and other relatives request the faithful to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be today at the family estate in Himlayan Pilipino at 2:00 PM.

The family wishes to extend their heartfelt thanks to all of her blood donors particularly Kuya Noe and Bobby Bulaong, employees of the House of Representatives and members of Chapter North A1C, CFC as well as all the staff of National Kidney & Transplant Institute.

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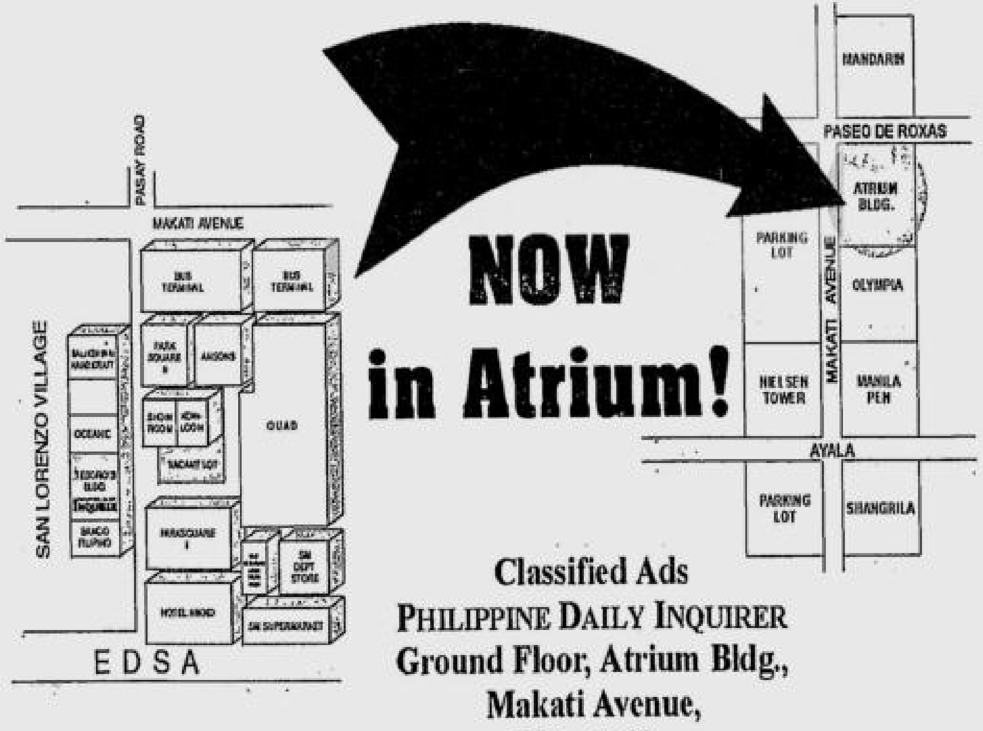

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January 16, 2001

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

The National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) invites all qualified janitorial agencies to prequalify and bid for the utility services requirements at the NHMFC Head Office, NHMFC Taguig Warehouse, and Imus, Cavite and Sta. Rosa, Laguna Satellite Offices, with a total requirement of twenty-four (24) utility personnel.

Interested parties may secure prequalification information sheet starting January 30, 2001 to February 2, 2001 from the Office of the Manager, Physical Resources Department at the 7th Floor, Filomena Bldg. III, 104 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. A pre-bid conference will be held at the NHMFC Multi-Purpose Hall on February 16, 2001, by which actual submission and opening of bids shall be announced. Only prequalified janitorial agencies will be allowed to attend the pre-bid conference. Failure to attend the pre-bidding conference will be a ground for disqualification to participate the bidding.

All proposals must be accompanied by a bidder's bond equivalent to 5% of the total bid price but not exceeding P10,000.00 in the form of cash, manager's check payable to NHMFC or GSIS bid bond.

NHMFC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality/deficiency therein or to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Corporation.

For further information/clarification on the above matters, please contact Ms. Loida R. Raymundo of the Property and Supply Management Division, Telephone No. 893-1501, Local 324 and 327.

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(PDI--Jan. 30, 2001)

Macapagal junks plan to privatize Napocor

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will not support a proposed law privatizing the state power monopoly, National Power Corp., because it would require the government to absorb the ailing company's debts, according to a senior aide.

Renato Corona, Ms Macapagal's chief of staff and spokesman, said the Cabinet last week decided not to push for passage of the proposed power sector reform bill because the government doesn't have enough money to pay National Power's debts.

"It requires the government to spend P10 billion, which we cannot afford," said Corona.

The House of Representatives and the Senate have passed several bills that aim to promote greater competition in the electricity industry. A joint committee is now working to reconcile the conflicting provisions in the proposed laws.

The committee has until Feb. 9, when Congress adjourns for the May elections, to come up with a unified version for approval by both branches of the legislature.

Foreign and local investors await passage of the bill, looking to acquire the power plants National Power will have to auction as part of any privatization plan.

Local industries hope the break-up of the state power monopoly will foster greater competition and reduce power costs, among the highest in Asia.

The Asian Development Bank has withheld $250 million of loans and loan guarantees pending passage of the law and the sale of National Power's generating units.

Bloomberg

Lopezes take second look at gov't interest in PNCC

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LOPEZ group is likely to revive its bid to acquire the state's 80-percent stake in Philippine National Construction Corp. after the government agreed to sell only the company's tollway franchise while shedding off its real estate assets to pay off its debts.

Manila North Tollways Corp. president Jose "Ping" de Jesus said the group would certainly take a look at PNCC now that the government would enhance its value first before putting it on the auction block.

De Jesus said the Lopez group did not join PNCC's bidding last year because it was interested only in PNCC's tollway business and not in its real estate assets.

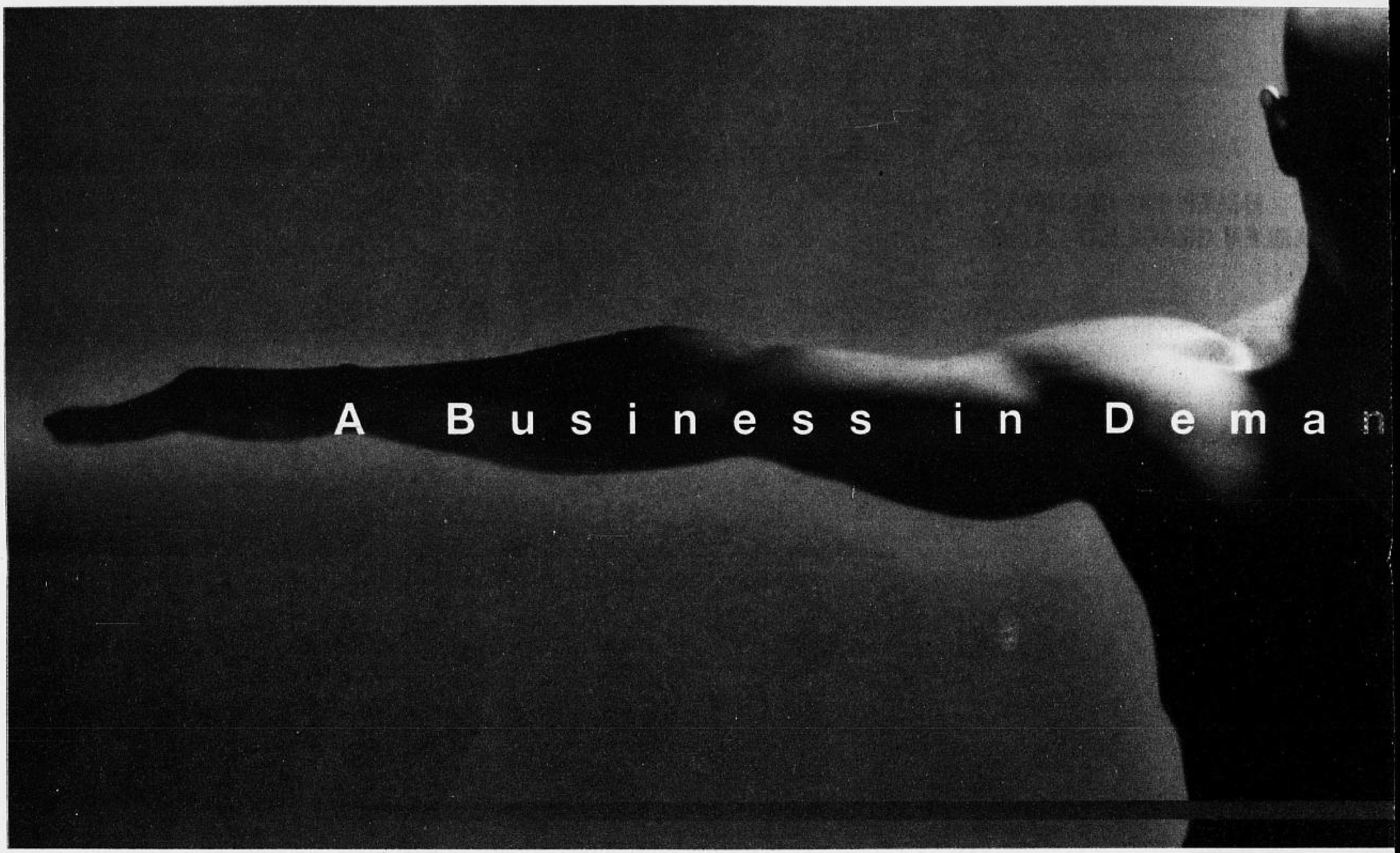
There were only three bidders in PNCC's auction last year with the highest bidder rejected by the Asset Privatization Trust. The Strategic Alliance Development Corp. (Stradec) and Korean pharmaceutical giant Dong-A offered only P1.228 billion for the government's 80-percent share in PNCC because it was deemed way below the indicative bid price of P7 billion.

De Jesus said that the government should repackage PNCC so that the bidding would focus on how much the company's tollway franchise—which lapses on 2007 but is renewable for another 30 years—is worth.

Based on previous audit, PNCC has P23 billion worth of booked and unbooked assets in Mandaluyong, Bicutan and scattered all over the North and South Luzon Expressways.

The Privatization Management Office is taking a new strategy in selling PNCC shares by first enhancing its value by laying-off redundant personnel, shutting down its unprofitable construction division, and winding down its real estate business by selling its vast properties, particularly its 5-hectare reclaimed property at the government financial center along Roxas Boulevard.

PNCC is a minority investor in Manila North Tollways which is controlled by the Lopez group (First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp.) and Egis group of France. The company is handling the P15 billion rehabilitation and expansion of the North Luzon expressway.



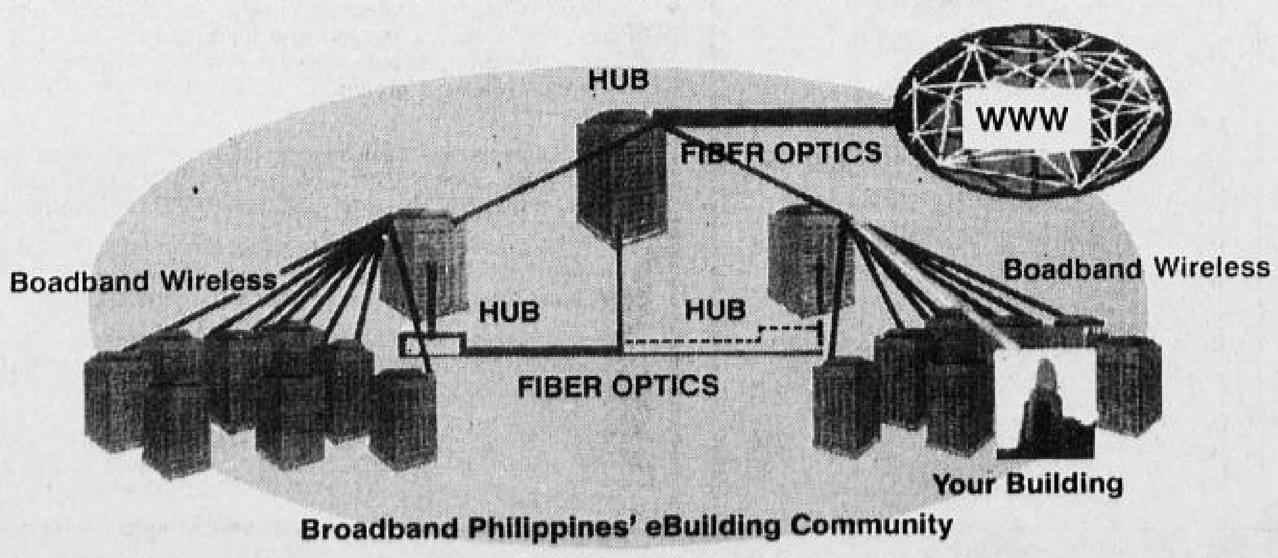
Broadband Wireless Technology-Providing the most reliable service in the country.

Broadband Philippines, the country's premier broadband service provider, introduces a state-of-the-art technology known as Broadband Wireless Technology in the Philippine communications scene.

Broadband Wireless Technology uses microwave frequencies to transmit your data at speeds up to 4 Gbps. With new modulation schemes being developed now, this capacity will be increased further by 4 to 5 times. Broadband Wireless technology is superior in the sense that it can be deployed rapidly, is cost-effective and future-proof. Being cost-effective means Broadband Philippines can translate this into better value and service to its customers. Future proof means that it is able to scale upwards and integrate with old and new systems or applications.

Aside from Broadband Wireless Technology, Broadband Philippines will also be using Fiber Optics, the ultimate solution to Internet and data networks. With Fiber Optics Technology, glass threads are used to transmit data using light as a medium. In addition, data is transmitted digitally (the natural form of computer data) rather than in analog form. This technology greatly increases speed of transmission by multiples of thousands.

Broadband Wireless Technology and Fiber Optics provide the best combination of capacity, economics, and ease of deployment. This combination provides Broadband Philippines a quantum leap over its competitors and allows it to offer the most reliable service in the country.



Broadband Philippines' eBuilding Community

With all the talk about Broadband lately, freelance writer Maelyn M. Angulo recently sat down with Broadband Philippines Chairman and CEO Joey de Venecia and their VP for Marketing Martin Nery to find out more about the company's plans

Angulo: What is broadband?

De Venecia: Broadband communications is the next step in integrating Philippine corporations with the world. It changes the way we do business. You're able to transfer data files at very high speed. You are able to manage communication processes in a more efficient way at less cost.

Broadband is basically a highway that we are setting up. On this highway, companies can work as one. If you have a company and you want to communicate with your sales teams, you can meet with them in virtually one location using this broadband highway. You can have five remote offices having video conferences with the sales manager to plan sales strategies for the day or for the week. Top managers can have video conferences with anyone in the organization at any given time.

You will need at least a 384 kbps (thousand bits of data per second) link from a telecommunications company to be able to do video conferencing. And that's very expensive. For small and medium enterprises, it's very costly. That is what we are planning to address.

Angulo: How do you plan to introduce broadband in the Philippines?

De Venecia: Broadband Philippines is the first telecommunication operator in the country that will use both wired and wireless technologies. On the first-mile connection to the customers, it is what you call the broadband wireless or the wireless protocol whose quality is equivalent to fiber optics. Our value proposition is we will be delivering fiber optic quality communication to customers to enable them to do a wide array of services like video conferencing; set up private networks, have faster Internet connectivity, and other things at very reasonable cost. Since our network will be both wired and wireless, we are able to effectively lower our charges to customers.

Bro

PLDT says it's in talks to buy GMA Network

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. confirmed yesterday one of its units was negotiating with owners of GMA Network Inc. to buy their stake in GMA-7, the country's No. 2 television station.

"We advise that a subsidiary, ePLDT Inc., recently commenced exploratory talks with certain owners of GMA Network about the possibility of buying their equity interest in GMA-7," PLDT said in a statement to regulators.

PLDT said it had yet to submit a final offer to buy a majority stake in the television station.

It was reported earlier that PLDT had given its final offer to GMA Network through Mediaquest Holdings Inc.

A source familiar with the negotiations was quoted as saying that PLDT gave GMA Network a copy of a memorandum of understanding on Friday.

"I think (GMA-7's) adviser for the deal is now reviewing the MOU. Perhaps they would propose to make some changes and present the proposal together with their comments to the shareholders of GMA (this week)," he said.

US investment bank Chase Manhattan Corp. was reportedly hired by GMA Network to review PLDT's proposal.

The same source said earlier that PLDT would shift its focus on Associated Broadcasting Corp. should talks to acquire GMA-7 fail.

The source said should GMA reject PLDT's final offer, the telecom giant would send a proposal to ABC, operator of ABC-5. ***Anthony O. Alcantara, Bloomberg***

Cuisia scores BSP sweetheart deals to bail out ailing banks

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE NATIONAL government may have to bail out the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas unless the country's central bank stops entering into "sweetheart deals" to bail out debt-laden banks like Philippine National Bank, former Central Bank Governor Jose Cuisia has warned.

In an interview, Cuisia criticized the BSP's plan to accept real estate from PNB as partial payment of a P15-billion emergency loan the cash-strapped bank got in October last year.

He said PNB's assets would only add to the central bank's losses from a large amount of non-performing assets that were already in its books.

Cuisia told the INQUIRER that in the cases of Orient Commercial Banking Corp. and Monte de Piedad and Savings Bank, the BSP wrote off billions worth of loans in exchange for properties that were worth a fraction of the value of these banks' debts.

A source familiar with the matter said in one case, the central bank accepted a P17.9-million property in Dagupan as a settlement for a P1.7-billion loan.

"They started off with a clean balance sheet. Now what kind of a balance sheet will they have five years from now? They might need another bailout from the government," Cuisia said.

PNB is set to settle a P15-billion debt it owes the BSP through a "dacion en pago"—payment in kind—arrangement.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said in an interview earlier that PNB, controlled by beer and tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan, could use its foreclosed real assets to pay for an emergency loan it obtained from the central bank on Oct. 6 last year.

"The P15 billion will be paid within the 180-day period, but it could be in cash or in assets," Reyes told reporters.

He said the PNB loan would not be converted into a long-term obligation, as the bank previously planned.

Among the assets to be surrendered to the central bank were the PNB Financial Center, which had a book value of P4 billion and an appraised value of about P10 billion.

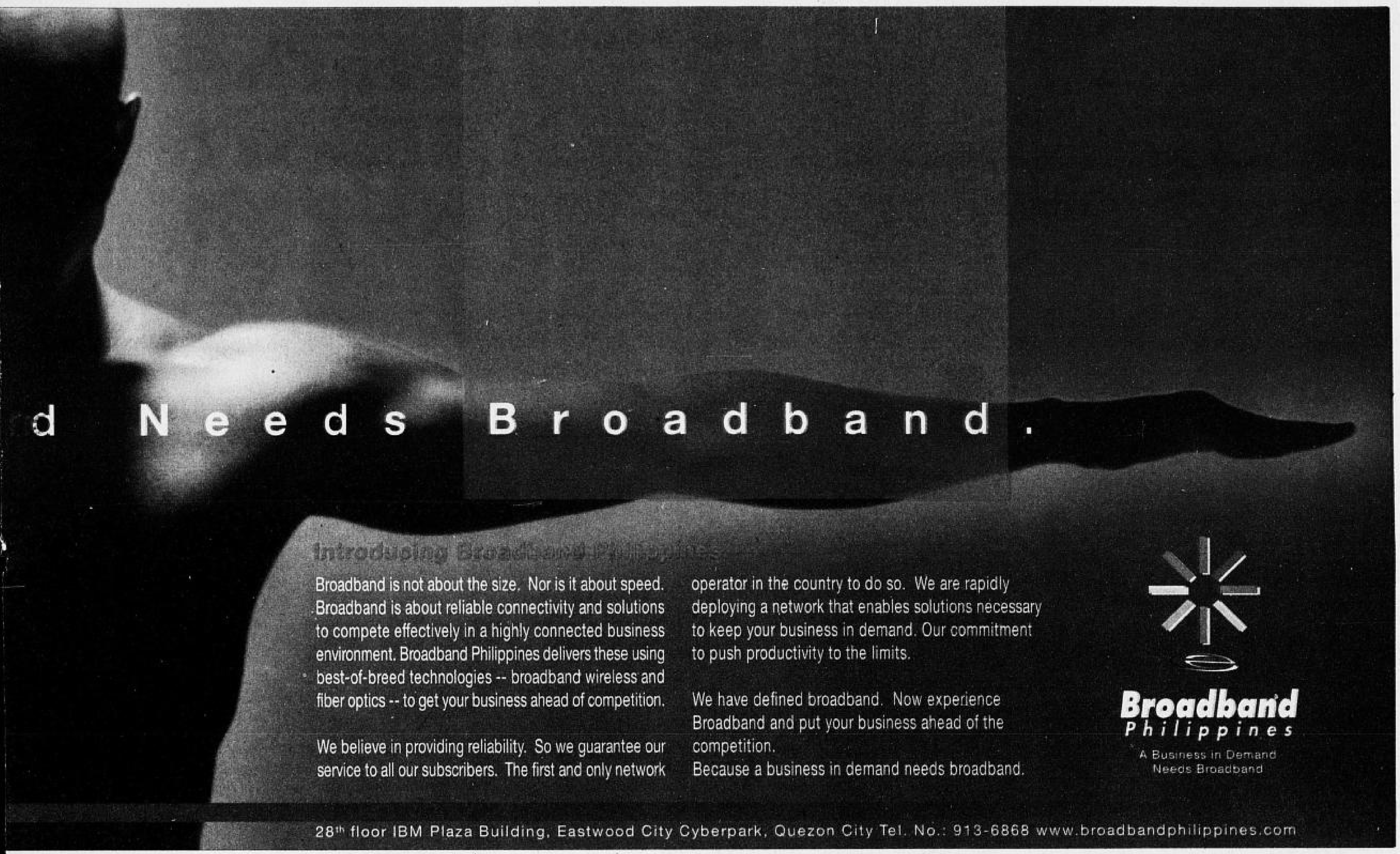
Reyes said the bank's rehabilitation program was on track and could be approved by the central bank in the coming weeks.

"We will not buy NPLs from PNB. As of today, the rehab plan schedule is on track," he said. The central bank earlier said PNB's rehabilitation plan should be approved within the month.

PNB plans to settle some P10 billion it owes the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. by transferring government liabilities to PDIC worth about P9 billion.

These debts include a P5-billion loan the Bureau of Customs has used to pay its obligations to Swiss inspection firm Societe Generale de Surveillance and a P4.5-billion loan that a Philippine sugar trading company got from PNB under the Marcos administration.

PNB sought a short-term emergency loan to ease its liquidity problems. Critics tagged it as another "crony deal" of the Estrada administration, considering PNB was owned largely by Tan, one of former President Joseph Estrada's biggest campaign contributors.



Broadband is not about the size. Nor is it about speed. Broadband is about reliable connectivity and solutions to compete effectively in a highly connected business environment. Broadband Philippines delivers these using best-of-breed technologies -- broadband wireless and fiber optics -- to get your business ahead of competition.

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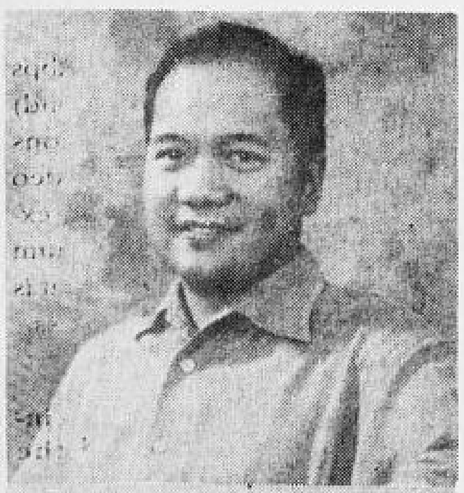
adband finally takes off in the Philippines.



DE VENECIA

When you look at the traditional telecommunications network, 70 percent of the cost of these networks is spent on diggings in the ground and on setting up cables. In our network we don't have those things. We put a broadband wireless radio on top of a building and invest on that building by cabling in that building and connecting customers in that building to our network. The value proposition there for building owners is we make their buildings broadband-ready.

Angulo: How would you describe the present telecommunications network we have in the country?

De Venecia: The present telecommunication infrastructure in the Philippines is not broadband but narrow band, because primarily it is for voice or phone calls. I remember when I was first connecting to the Internet, the modem speed I was using was 1200 baud and when it went up to 9.6 kbps, I was able to use the fax. When it went up to 14.4 kbps, I was able to do my e-mail yet it was still very slow. As the band became broader, we got new applications such as surfing the Internet. When we continue to improve the size of the highway, the size of the pipe, we can do more complex things.

That is why we have positioned ourselves to apply best-of-breed technologies to be able to address the expanding needs of corporations in the Philippines. Let's say you want to transfer the engineering design of an entire building, say a 20-megabit file, you'll need at least eight hours to do that using today's telecom infrastructure. Secondly, since our telecom infrastructure is really for voice and not for data, you'll be lucky if you'll be able to complete that process. Sometimes the line just gets dropped and you have to download it again. In our network, we do that task in one minute because the capacity is so vast and broad.

Angulo: What is your company's focus right now?

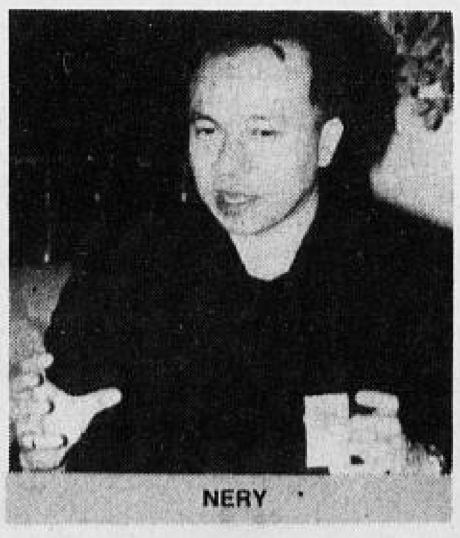
Nery: Our aim is to service our corporate customers well. Thus, we are now focused on building the most reliable broadband Internet and data network in the country.

Angulo: Do you plan to offer your services to households?

De Venecia: Broadband services are more concentrated with the corporate side. Our business model is building-centric, that is, we invest in buildings which house our corporate customers. We are currently deploying our network in Metro Manila, wiring buildings and putting radios on these buildings. We are creating an **e Building community** within our network: We're addressing the corporate market because this is really the driver of our economy. The performance of these companies will bring the economic benefits down to their employees.

Angulo: Do you think broadband will spur the growth of the Internet in the Philippines?

De Venecia: The growth of the Internet is driven by two things. First is the price of computers. It has not really gone down. If you'll buy a multimedia computer now, you'll have to spend 20-plus thousand or more. With the disposable income of the Filipinos, we're not there yet, unlike our neighbors. So computer penetration in the Philippines has not taken off as fast as in other countries. Second, the telecom infrastructure is not really there. It's there but the quality is really for voice, not for data transmission. In order to drive Internet usage and growth, the proper broadband infrastructure is necessary.



NERY

Angulo: There are other broadband providers that are coming out lately. What makes your company different?

Nery: It is our belief that technology will continue to improve and that we need to have an ALL-NEW network in place that was designed for broadband from the start. It is not meant to disparage other technologies but we feel that not having to upgrade old networks means a brand new network that is broadband inside and out, a service that grows with the customers needs. It is also our belief that old networks designed for things other than broadband can only be upgraded so much until it hits the limit. You cannot force true broadband into copper infrastructure, which is primarily designed for voice calls. There is only so much copper can do.

In fact, we are so confident about the technologies we are deploying and its reliability that we are willing to provide a guarantee of availability of service to all our customers across the board—a first in the Philippines.

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LAS PIÑAS DISPUTE

Property worth P27B, says OSG

BY JERRY ESPLANADA

THE 99.6-HECTARE prime property in Las Piñas being claimed by the government is definitely worth more than P27 billion, according to the Office of the Solicitor General.

In a memorandum to the Supreme Court, the OSG asserted that the state's "valuation of over P27 billion is accurate."

The government took into consideration "certain factors, such as (but not limited to) the location of the property, its proximity to the premier Ayala-Alabang subdivision and the present cost of money."

'Absurd exaggeration'

The real estate firm Peltan Development Inc., which is claiming ownership over more than 75 hectares of the disputed land, dismissed as an "absurd exaggeration" the government's valuation.

The Binondo, Manila-based company claimed the property, located in Tindig na Mangga, Las Piñas, was "raw land appraised by an independent appraisal firm at only P2,000 per square meter or about P2 billion."

State lawyers, however, said that "by simple mathematical computation, one can easily reach a ballpark figure on the basis of the prevailing rates for the subject property which is adjacent to the properties" of the plush Ayala-Alabang Village.

In the final analysis, the OSG said "the determination of property valuation, being a factual issue, can only be resolved by reception of evidence in an appropriate proceedings."

Illegally titled

The OSG has asked the high tribunal to revert to public domain the disputed property, which the state considers an illegally titled piece of real estate.

In its memorandum, the OSG also urged the high court to declare as null and void 1929 land titles supposedly covering the disputed property.

The OSG claimed the case respondents—Peltan and the Espinosa group—"failed to produce and present evidence that the land registered under Original Certificate of Title No. 4216 had been classified as alienable and disposable public land at the time the application for registration was allegedly granted."

In September 1999, the high court's Third Division upheld an earlier decision of the Court of Appeals to award the disputed land to the heirs of Lorenzo Gana and Juliana Carlos. The ruling in effect upheld the validity of a 1929 land title supposedly covering the Las Piñas property.

Forestland argument

In questioning the decision, the OSG argued that the land in question could not have been titled in 1929 as the area was still part of unclassified forestland and was not declassified as alienable and disposable.

The whole of Las Piñas was originally classified as forestland until 1928 when some 1,200 ha. of the entire 2,556 ha. comprising the town was declared alienable and disposable.

But the disputed land was not part of the 1928 declaration, the OSG pointed out as it also stressed that "the application for private ownership of the Las Piñas property is considered null and void for the simple reason that it was instituted at a time when it had not yet been released by government as alienable and disposable."

Peltan lawyers said "giving cognizance to the (state's) forestland argument would mean that hundreds of thousands of OCTs covering lands not only in Las Piñas but also in other parts of Metro Manila are null and void."

They said OCT 4216 "from which the titles of Peltan and other individual owners have been derived has been affirmed by the (Third Division) as valid and genuine."

The private firm Firestone Ceramic Inc., an intervenor in the real estate case which claims ownership over 3.7 ha. of the disputed land, said the respondents' land titles were fake.

In June, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Associate Justices Josue Bellosillo, Reynato Puno, Santiago Kapunan, Vicente Mendoza, Arturo Buena, Consuelo Yñares-Santiago and then associate justice Fidel Purisima voted in favor of the state and Firestone's pleas.

The six dissenting associate justices were Jose Melo, Jose Vitug, Artemio Panganiban, Leonardo Quisumbing, Bernardo Pardo and Minerva Gonzaga-Reyes.

Prayer

In the land dispute, the OSG said the state "most respectfully prays that the decision rendered in this case be corrected to bring it in line with the repeatedly upheld principle that lands not classified as alienable and disposable remain so."

"It is the private claimants (Peltan and the Espinosa group) who bear the burden of showing that the Executive Department has in fact classified the land as disposable and alienable. This would be the opportunity to pronounce and reiterate what the law has been and still is," the OSG noted.

Under the Regalian Doctrine, the OSG emphasized, "all lands of the public domain belong to the state and that the state is the source of any asserted right to ownership in land and charged with the conservation of such patrimony. This same doctrine also states that all lands not otherwise appearing to be clearly within private ownership are presumed to belong to the state."

The state won the first two rounds in its legal battle with Peltan and the Espinosas. First, it succeeded in convincing the Supreme Court to take up the case in a full-court hearing. Then the high court denied with finality the respondents' motion for reconsideration of its June decision to take up the state's petition.

Metro landowners await high court ruling

LANDOWNERS in Metro Manila and nearby provinces are anxiously awaiting the decision of the Supreme Court on a land dispute in Las Piñas City because of its possible effect on the legal ownership of their own properties.

The Supreme Court's en banc ruling on this case was scheduled to be handed down last Jan. 23, but it was moved to Jan.30.

The case involves more than 99 hectares of land in Barangay Tindig na Mangga, whose original certificate of title (OCT) 421-6 issued in 1929 is being questioned by Firestone Ceramics of Chinese businessman Mariano Nocom.

Firestone Ceramics claims to own 18 of those 99 hectares as purportedly covered by its OCT A-S 47 issued in 1969. But the Supreme Court has nullified OCT A-S 47 in favor of OCT 4216, which its Third Division has upheld four times as valid and genuine.

Still, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), reportedly on the urging of Nocom, pursued the case and elevated it to the Supreme Court en banc in a bid to reverse the previous rulings of its Third Division and allegedly clear the way for the government to regain ownership of the property.

Grossly exaggerated

The OSG claimed that the property was valued at P30 billion. But this was disputed by the owners, claiming that this figure was grossly exaggerated and invented by the solicitor general, who priced the raw land at P30,000 a square meter or 15 times the current value of around P2,000 a square meter.

The present case was filed by then Solicitor General Raul Goco after two highly respected solicitor generals under two different administrations rejected Nocom and Firestone's repeated appeal that such a case be filed by the government.

Meanwhile, Nocom is the same businessman who has obtained a series of court decisions requiring government-owned Polytechnic University of the Philippines to sell to him several hectares of its Nagtahan campus for only P1,500 a square meter. The PUP has petitioned the Supreme Court over these rulings.

As to the rightful ownership of the Las Piñas property, both the OSG and Nocom argued that OCT 4216 could not have been legally issued in 1929 allegedly since the area was still a forestland at that time and that it was only in 1969 when it was declared alienable and disposable.

This argument, however, has alarmed hundreds of thousands of Metro Manila landowners whose ownership of their properties has been derived from Torrens titles issued before 1969 or even much earlier.

They are now asking if the OSG can question their Torrens titles after 50 or a hundred years since their issuance.

List

A certification from the Registry of Deeds in Pasig listed various land titles issued before World War II and even earlier than 1929. The list included OCT 4216, which was issued to Lorenzo Gana by decree upon order of the land courts.

Derived from this OCT were the land titles of the Espinosas and other families, including property firm Peltan Development Corp.

Espinosas' lawyers Sabino Padilla Jr. and Eduardo P. Lizares had told the Supreme Court that while forestlands could not be titled, it was the land registration court that had the jurisdiction to decide on whether the land was agricultural and alienable or forestland and inalienable.

They cited several decisions of Justices Malcolm and Johnson during the American regime and the landmark ruling penned by Justice Irene Castro in 1990 that the court's determination that the land was agricultural could not be reversed long after the decision became final.

Net One Center: To infinity and beyond

AT THE JOBSITE are Net One Center's Macario Rufino, Jacques Dupasquier and Carlos Rufino.

TO SIMPLY refer to the new Net One Center office tower as state-of-the-art building would be a gross understatement. For while the 20-story project located at the heart of the equally futuristic Fort Bonifacio Global City is certainly on pace to set new standards in corporate building design and functionality, its advanced features are also all set to redefine the way people go about their business.

"Net One Center wants to establish a new benchmark for office buildings in the country," says Jacques A. Dupasquier, the highly effervescent chair of the newly established 19-1 Realty Corp. "First and foremost, we wanted this building to be at the leading edge of information technology so it really caters to those who want to take full advantage of the benefits that today's technology offers.

"We also wanted this building to be of world-class quality and meet the highest standards in terms of both materials used and features offered. More important, we wanted this building to have an unmistakable character of refinement and exclusivity. Basically, we envision Net One to be the first boutique office building in the Philippines."

The 19-1 Realty management, by the way, also includes the brothers Macario "Cary" Rufino and Carlos "Charlie" Rufino, president and director, respectively. Like Dupasquier, who comes from the Aguirre clan of real estate developers, the Rufinos are acknowledged pillars in the real estate industry and are also known for their hands-on involvement in every undertaking that has their personal stamp of approval.

'Future-proof" building

The Net One Center is one such undertaking. Because the structure is located at a government-accredited "IT Zone" or 'e-square,'" these indefatigable gentlemen are ensuring that this office tower will provide the ideal, if not perfect, venue for the rapid growth, further development and even enhancement of electronic commerce to millions of Internet citizens online.

To this end, Net One Center boasts of unique and powerful features that adhere and cater to the ever-evolving demands of e-commerce. The building takes full advantage of the Global City's fiber-optic loop, which is 11 kilometers of underground fiber optic cabling network that will support communications requirements from telephones to the fastest interactive video and data technology available.

There's also fiber-to-the-floor connectivity that takes advantage of Bonifacio Global City's current online capacity of 128 kbps minimum plus an infrastructure primed for a 2 MB requirement. Net One Center provides cable management flexibility with 7.5 cm raised flooring in all offices while microwave technology is made available via a 40-m Telecom Tower located at the roof deck. On top of all these is the availability of additional space for vertical risers for future telecommunications expansion requirements.

"Things are changing so fast, we cannot predict the new technologies coming in," quips Cary Rutino. "That's why we're making sure that Net One Center is equipped to be one step ahead of the future. So we've not only included all the technological requirements relevant to today's needs but also put in provisions for future expansion. Like in case, our tenants are not happy with just having the fiber optics coming from Smart or PLDT, then they can actually also have other kinds of connections for the future."

Ready when you are

For 24-7 workaholics, there's also 100-percent back-up power using heavy-duty Caterpillar generator sets and a unique air-conditioning system which allows temperature settings on each floor to works independently from the rest of the building.

"Net One Center has been designed in such a way that it seriously takes into account the flexible working hours required by the Internet Age," explains Charlie Rufino. "Our air-conditioning system has 20 individually controlled zones per floor and that means our tenants can actually use their own air-conditioning almost at their own requirement, at their own time, without paying a premium. And this air-conditioning system is very efficient, the sophisticated name for it is VRV or Variable Refrigerant Volume. It's actually a comparatively expensive system but we're more than happy to incorporate it, as it will eventually turn out to be more cost-efficient in the long term."

The developers all acknowledge that the advanced features of Net One Center will benefit not only companies that specialize in information technology, but also other industries like banks, insurance and manufacturing whose respective IT or Management Information System (MIS) divisions will surely appreciate the competitive advantages that the office tower offers.

The 'e-square' advantage

Nonetheless, IT companies are the ones that are likely to reap the most rewards in choosing Net One Center as their future corporate headquarters. Because the Global City's "e-square" has been recognized as an IT Zone by the Philippine Export Zone Authority or Peza, qualified IT locators are assured of enjoying commercial incentives and benefits. These will come in the form of tax holidays and tax incentives in the importation of equipment, as well as minimal government restrictions for the employment of foreign nationals. Working within this privileged status is definitely a boon for globalization policies and allows for the creative exchange of ideas between our very own talented and skilled individuals and their counterparts from other parts of the world.

Which is also the reason Net One Center also puts a strong premium on providing lifestyle features, as Charlie Rufino recognizes that information technology is "very much also about talented people bumping into each other and socially exchanging thoughts."

"We do intend to have a nice bar and café down on the ground floor. We want to have areas where people naturally can see each other as they go in and out of the building so there will be elegant lobby areas for them to meet and interact socially," shares Charlie. "And because it's part of a very large complex that is Global City, we expect Net One Center to become a location of choice for all IT locators."

TUSCANY model house

Crown Asia home series

CROWN Asia, the only choice in middle income housing, introduces a new line of houses designed to cater to those looking for a stylish home at very affordable rates.

The Crown Asia Home Series features elegantly designed affordable homes in different subdivisions in the Novaliches area, with prices ranging from P713,000 to P1 million.

"The houses in our Crown Asia Home Series have been adopted from those available in the different Crown Asia subdivisions," said chief executive officer Marcelino C. Mendoza.

"Although these new house models differ slightly in terms of floor and lot areas from their Crown Asia counterparts, they are constructed using the same standards of quality," he added.

The Crown Asia Home Series will be available in exclusive enclaves in existing subdivisions in the Novaliches area such as Coverstone Lane, Bayberry Lane, Portals and the soon-to-open Fairway Lane.

The Tuscany and Florence house models are the first to be made available for the series.

Tuscany is a two- or three-bedroom townhouse with minimum floor area of 45 square meters that can be extended to 60 square meters. It is priced beginning at P713,000.

Florence is a single firewall house that can have either two or three bedrooms with a minimum floor area of 44 square meters that can be extended to 50 square meters. It is priced beginning at P888,000.

Both houses feature completely painted interiors, floor tiles, kitchen cabinets and its exterior features a two-tone paint design. As a Crown Asia home, it uses the steel rafter roofing system, which is not only stronger, but also lasts longer than ordinary wood beamed systems.

The finished house models of Tuscany and Florence can be viewed at the showcase area of Springs Subdivision on Susano Road in Novaliches.

For more information on the different house models and subdivisions of Crown Asia you can visit their booths at the SM City North Edsa and SM City Fairview in Quezon City and SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. Those interested can also call up the Crown Asia main office at 726-0083 to 84.

Case of GEP head filed with PRC

(From page B10)

was thus double reporting and entry of operational expenses from two sources of funds.

The above three items were reported by then national treasurer Antonio during the GEP national convention in Cagayan de Oro City on June 16-17, 2000. The complaint claimed that the alleged discrepancy and double reporting will amount to dishonesty and dishonorable conduct for which the then GEP treasurer should be held accountable without prejudice to any criminal liability for malversation through falsification, if he fails to justify his acts.

4. When Antonio was elected member of the board of governors in 1998, he did not possess the necessary residence qualification for he became a GEP member only in 1995. This was a clear violation of the Policy Manual of the Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines Inc. which provides that only a registered regular member for the last five years can be a candidate for the board of governors.

In a recent meeting, the Council of Elders, or past presidents, unanimously recommended that the remaining balance of P59,1000 of the GEP Region 4 must be paid by this region immediately. The council also recommended that the amount of P31,775.52 must be restored also to the building fund by the GEP national board for administrative year 1999-2000. The council likewise asked that the GEP national board of administrative year 1999-2000 must restored an identical amount of P31,775.52 to the building fund.

The Council of Elders submitted its findings and recommendations to the PRC Board of Geodetic Engineering which is investigating the complaint. Council members who attended the meeting and submitted the recommendations were Narciso V. Villapando, Eleuterio M. de las Alas, Juanito B Bustalinio, Mariano M. Lucero Jr., Edilberto B. Tato, Restituto U. Bautista, Avelino L. San Buenaventura, Romeo T. Palermo, Ricardo Vasquez and Ambrosio P. Santos.

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REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

Southern Pinugay land dispute continues

BY TESSA RELAMPAGOS SALAZAR

WHO says agricultural land and satellite earth stations go well together?

The nine-year clash between the Southern Pinugay Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative Inc. and the Philippine Communication Satellite (Philcomsat) was renewed when accusations were traded during a Jan. 17 preliminary hearing conducted by the committee on agrarian reform at the House of Representatives.

Potential beneficiaries

Philcomsat accused the SPFMCI, headed by its chair, Santiago Sta. Maria, as "a band of professional squatters" who entered into its security zone and put up housing structures without consent from Philcomsat or the Department of National Defense. Members of the SPFMCI have been identified by the Department of Agrarian Reform as potential CARP beneficiaries.

Philcomsat, on the other hand, was reportedly preventing the farmers from bringing in seeds for planting and materials for constructing their houses in the area. Some 400 farmer-occupants were evicted last year and their houses demolished by a team allegedly headed by Philcomsat's chief security. This was done reportedly without a court order, 30-day notice, consultations and relocation site.

Also reported during the hearing was the presence of the Philippine Army in the area two years ago and the firing of armalites, causing fears and disturbing farming activities.

Security zone

In 1982, 5,654 hectares surrounding the satellite earth station in Baras, Rizal—within the 3-km radius of the main satellite station—was declared a security zone through Presidential Ddecree 1848.

In 1992, however, after discovering that the entire Pinugay area had been occupied by farmers tending mangoes, bananas, corn and rice, the DAR declared it under Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program via a compulsory acquisition scheme. Philcomsat's application for CARP coverage exemption was turned down by then Agrarian Reform Secretary Ernesto Garilao. A motion for reconsideration was subsequently filed by Philcomsat and rejected by then Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales.

Third party

Enter a third party. A certain Norberto Mingao of Silangan Venture Inc. claimed to have bought the rights of over a 100-hectare portion of the area from previous farmer occupants.

Philcomsat filed a case against Mingao but the case was resolved in Mingao's favor. Another pending case was filed by Philcomsat against Mingao.

Mingao and his group claimed to have cultivated the land with rice, bamboo, mangoes, banana and other trees for reforestation. They also claimed to have developed fishponds and tilapia hatcheries.

In a statement signed by John M. Mingao, the Mingao group accused the southern Pinugay farmers cooperative of forcibly occupying portions of the disputed land through harassment. Mingao claimed in a statement that his group has employed blue guards and did a "demolition activity to eject the illegal occupants in the disputed area."

Powerless

The Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (Pakisama), meantime, issued a statement assessing the DAR as powerless in protecting the plight of the farmers asserting their rights under the law. Pakisama claims that the DAR was unable to stop the "armed goons led by Mingao, the elements of the Philippine Army and Baras Mayor Roberto Ferrera from harassing and forcibly evicting the tenant farmers."

It was a House resolution filed by Rep. Leonardo Montemayor that directed an inquiry into the problem of the potential farmer-beneficiaries at the security zone area of Philcomsat. Philcomsat's security zone is located in Barangay Pinugay, Baras, Rizal, and is covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program according to documents furnished to the INQUIRER.

Case of GEP head filed with PRC

THE NATIONAL president of the Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines (GEP) has been charged, before the Professional Regulation Commission with dishonesty on two counts while he was the GEP national treasurer and with lack of qualification when he run for and won as member of the board of governors two years ago.

Charged before the PRC was Alfredo D. Antonio, GEP national president. The complaint was filed by engineer Rosario B. Mercado, GEP-NCR president; engineers Policarpio B. Alberto, Richard G. Montano, Gilbert P. Palacol, Wilfredo N. Veluz, Teofilo R. Laguardia and Fred M. Mabaquiao, directors; Rolando Nath. S. Pada, past president; Reynaldo L. Isip, treasurer and president of the UP Alumni Geodetic Engineers; and Randolf S. Vicente, executive secretary.

Also signing as complainants in the case are the officers of the GEP-NCR Council of Leaders:

Manuel E. Gonzales, chair and former assistant secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Placido A. Naval, vice chair and former chair, PRC Board of Geodetic Engineering; Anselmo D. Almazan, Region 3 past president and president, SFGE; Bartolome S. Rivera, past GEP-NCR president; Leandro M. Sanchez Jr., past GEP-NCR president; Pedro S. Manalo, past GEP-NCR president; and Rogelio P. dela Rosa, past GEP-NCR president and past chair, PRC Board of Geodetic Engineering.

The specific cases, which the PRC and the Board of Geodetic Engineering were asked to investigate are:

1. The alleged P59,100 discrepancy in the financial statements for fiscal years 1998, 1999 and 2000. In the administrative fund financial statement for fiscal year May 31, 1999-May 31, 2000, the annual share of Region 4 for membership dues was P73,500, while in the administrative fund financial statement for fiscal year June 16, 1998-May 13, 1995 the partial payment for the annual share was P14,400.

2. Expenses totaling P187,123,89 stated in the building fund financial statements for fiscal years June 16, 1998-May 30, 1999 and May 31, 1999-May 31, 2000 were classified under building expenses when they were clearly operational expenses.

3. Bad debts amounting to P31,775.52 reported as item "h" under operational expenses of the building fund financial statement for fiscal year May 31, 1999-May 31, 2000 was again entered and reported as item No. "27" under application of funds of the operational expenses financial statement for fiscal year May 31, 1999-May 31, 2000. There

CASE/p.B9

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LINA, 4th from left, receives a plaque of recognition from Creba for his role in the historic Edsa II protest and his support of the chamber's advocacy for a sustainable housing finance system for homeless families. Greeting Lina are, from left, Goyareb, Serrano, Posadas, Adaza, Cura and Millan.

Lina vows crackdown on LGUs' property 'impositions'

LAGUNA Gov. Joey D. Lina Jr., designated secretary of interior and local government, has vowed to mount a crackdown on racketeering local government officials who impose and collect "personal fees" on property development, especially for housing, on "per-square-meter basis."

Lina made the statement after inducting the 2001 officers and board directors of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) last week at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. Businessman Charlie V. Goyareb and lawyer Manuel M. Serrano led the new year's Creba lineup as national president and board chair, respectively.

"Impositions" by local officials on housing development have been one of the perennial complaints of developers, especially those in socialized and economic housing for low-income families. For years, Creba has been condemning these "extraneous, onerous collections" that, it said, only add to the costs of constructing housing units and other property in general.

Continuing advocacy

At the same time, Lina supported Creba's continuing advocacy for closer government-private sector collaboration in housing development and the evolution of a sustainable housing finance system.

In an earlier statement, Goyareb had expressed optimism that with the assumption into office of the new Macapagal administration, "the search for a truly sustainable housing program will begin anew under a government-private sector partnership."

Lina also said local government units should be tapped in the housing program.

In the past few years, Creba said government-private sector partnership was "often paid lip service to and never honestly pursued by past administrators."

Workable solution

An efficient, workable solution to the "crisis of homelessness," Goyareb stressed, has been "a crying need for sometime now." The backlog of housing units required to provide decent homes to the underprivileged and other economic classes, he said, has reached a staggering number, the latest estimate putting it at some four-million units.

Creba deplored that government housing effort has the most part focused on "short-term, short-vision concerns that do not even last beyond the term of office of national leaders."

The chamber, an umbrella organization of corporate and individual professional real estate players, has been espousing the need for a sustainable housing finance system. It has formulated a comprehensive home financing scheme that seeks to "tap mostly non-governmental sources of funs, therefore without the least call on state coffers."

It is thus Creba's ardent wish, Goyareb said, that the new dispensation will be open to the idea of a sustainable housing finance system to propel housing provision to cope with increasing population "even as administrations come and go."

Inductees

Aside from Goyareb and Serrano, other Creba officers inducted by Lina were Dr. Eduardo C. Zialcita, executive vice president; Jerry M. Navarrete, VP for finance; Avelina P. Acuña, VP for external affairs; Purita R. Soliven, VP for internal affairs; Demetrio L. Posadas, VP for chapter affairs; lawyer Owen DC Lagumbay, corporate secretary; Teresita C. Millan, treasurer; and Rosemarie C. Basa, press relations officer.

The board of directors is composed of Posadas, Soliven, Pedro C. Tario, Navarrete, Serrano, Goyareb, Florentino S. Dulalia Jr., Domingo D. de Vera, Lagumbay, Acuña, lawyer Cesilo A. Adaza, Techie P. Bautista and Franklin G. Fuentebella.

Dr. Jaime A. Cura, outgoing president, formally turned over the gavel of authority to Goyareb.

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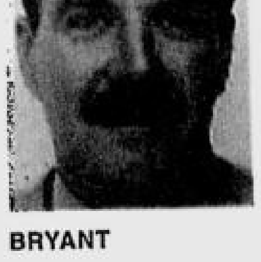
Monark Equipment names new president



BRYANT

MONARK Equipment has a new president in the person of Martin Bryant who assumed the position recently.

Bryant, who has been Monark's chief operating officer for the past four years, worked previously as senior executive with Caterpillar dealers in Australia and Asia for 17 years. He had involvement in major management and strategic decisions of Caterpillar dealerships. This development marks the first time in Monark Group's 38-year history to have a nonfamily member as president.

J.A. Banson is now chair and CEO and continues to be Monark's dealer principle and representing the owners as board chair.

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CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

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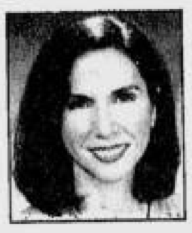
Unsolicited fitness advice for the President

WELL AND GOOD



Tina Aboitiz Juan

ONE of the irritating things about being President must be all the unsolicited advice from different sectors of society. But part of the job of being President is putting up with such advice which is just like being a good citizen.

Therefore, I have decided to put in my two cents' worth and give some unsolicited advice to Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, our new President. I promise, Madame President, my advice will not be controversial or political. It will be for your own good and your family as well.

The advice, in a nutshell, is to exercise regularly. Since I do not know you personally, I do not know if you already have the exercise habit or not. So I may sound a little foolish giving advice to someone who is already doing what I suggest but I figure that this advice also goes for many readers who are in high-stress jobs loaded with responsibilities and obligations. The way our economy is going these days, just trying to run a profitable business can already be as stressful as your job, the highest position in the land.

You are obviously used to a high-profile public life, having been in politics for some time now. But that is nothing compared to the demands of being the leader of our country especially in these "interesting" times. Not only will you have the weight of the country's problems squarely on your shoulders but also you will be tugged from all sides by people demanding your attention. Twenty-four hours a day will not be enough. For you, time is literally gold. However, I strongly encourage you to leave a little room in your schedule to exercise at least three times a week for one hour (or five to six times a week for 30 minutes). This investment in time will pay off in the end, I assure you.

Fitness is defined by the US President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports as "the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to enjoy leisure time pursuits and to meet unforeseen emergencies."

This is the kind of fitness you need to meet the daily demands of your job, have leftover energy for your family and still have strength to spare in case of "emergencies" (you know what I mean). Regular exercise can give you this kind of fitness.

Exercise improves brain function

You need to be alert and in full control of your mental capacity to make sound political decisions. Proper brain function depends on a good supply of oxygen. Vigorous exercise increases lung capacity so eight to 10 times more oxygen enters your lungs. It also improves the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood so your brain gets all the nutrients and oxygen it needs to perform at top capacity.

Exercise strengthens the heart and blood vessels

Madame President, your patience is going to be sorely tried in the next three years. This will make your blood pressure go through the roof—figuratively if not physically. Exercise can help you

UNSOLICITED/ p.C3

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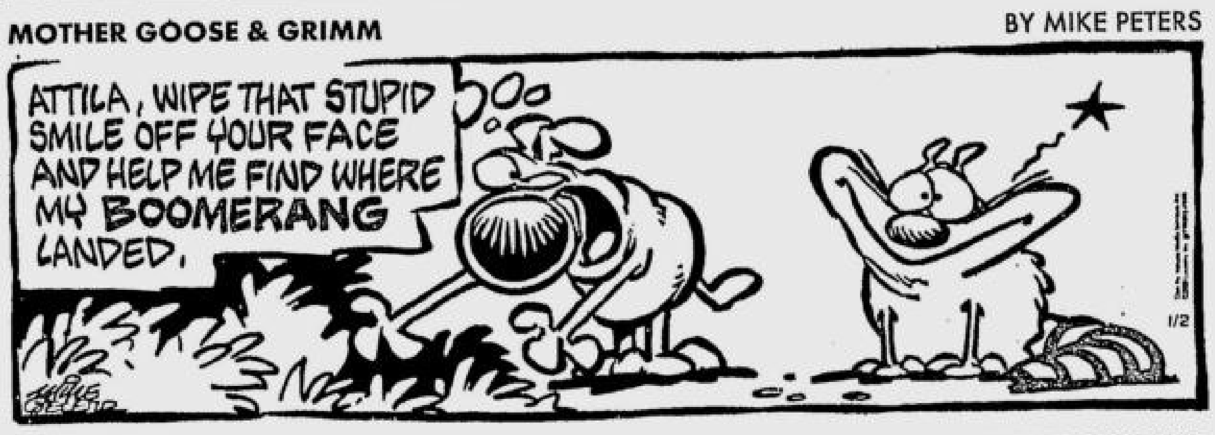
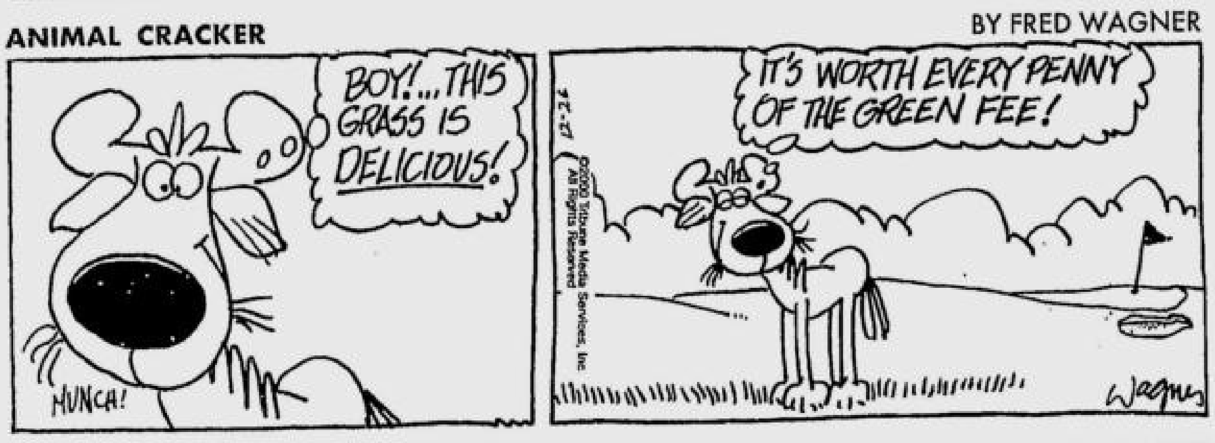
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


ATTILA, WIPE THAT STUPID SMILE OFF YOUR FACE AND HELP ME FIND WHERE MY BOOMERANG LANDED.
1/2

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


BOY!...THIS GRASS IS DELICIOUS!
MUNCH!
IT'S WORTH EVERY PENNY OF THE GREEN FEE!
12-27
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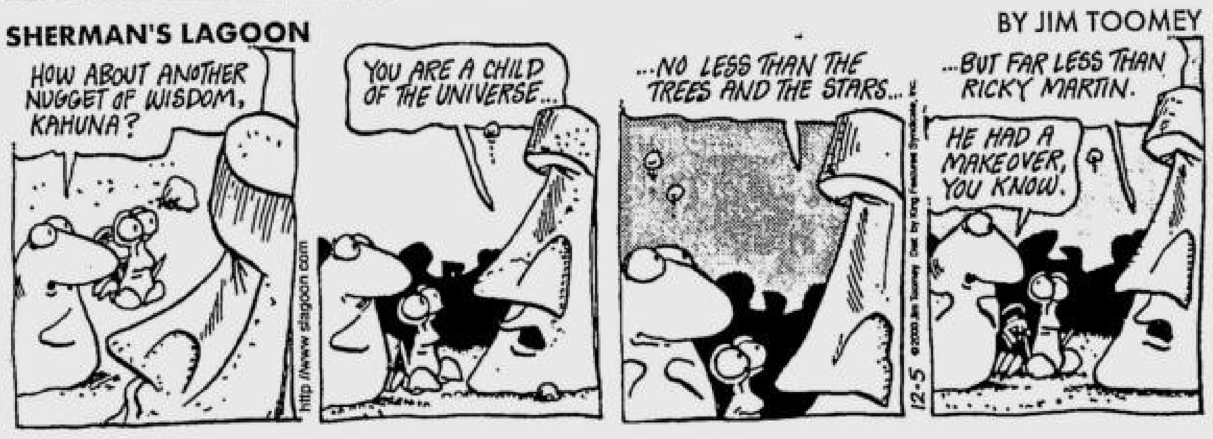
Wagner

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HOW ABOUT ANOTHER NUGGET OF WISDOM, KAHUNA?
YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE...
...NO LESS THAN THE TREES AND THE STARS...
...BUT FAR LESS THAN RICKY MARTIN.
HE HAD A MAKEOVER, YOU KNOW.
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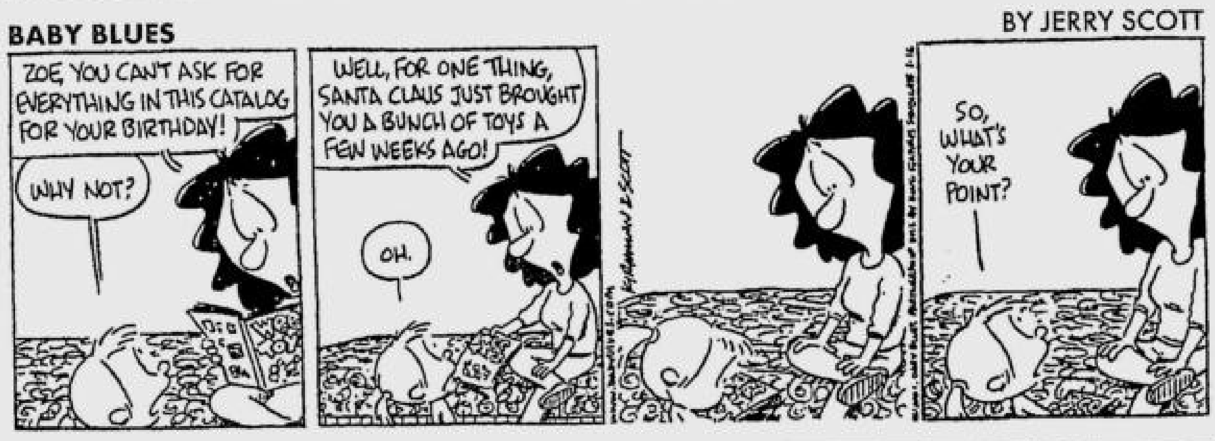
12-5

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE, YOU CAN'T ASK FOR EVERYTHING IN THIS CATALOG FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY!
WHY NOT?
WELL, FOR ONE THING, SANTA CLAUS JUST BROUGHT YOU A BUNCH OF TOYS A FEW WEEKS AGO!
OH.
SO, WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Vanessa Redgrave, Tammy Grimes, Jeanne Pruett, Louis Rukeyser, Christian Bale, Dick Cheney, Gene Hackman, Brett Butler

Happy Birthday: Put on those dancing shoes and strut your stuff this year. You will have plenty to say and to offer if you follow through with your plans. You will be up one minute and down the next, full of energy and extremely entertaining. This will be a year to remember with lots of unpredictable changes occurring. Your numbers: 19, 23, 25, 32, 38, 40

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You need time to reflect. Pamper yourself and re-evaluate your motives. You may have to change your direction slightly if you want to be happy. You can make a difference if you go after your goals.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will get sincere opinions from those who appreciate your creative talents. It is time to make suggestions to the groups that you're involved with. Take control of the situation.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): This is not the time to throw your weight around. Listen to the complaints of others and take time to assess the situation before you make any comments. You can help others if you try.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Family outings will be more rewarding than you thought. You'll enjoy teaching others how to do things that are second nature to you. Your leadership qualities will come in handy.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You won't be happy with the purchases you make today. It's wise to keep your money in a safe place and refrain from going to the mall. Problems with children will be frustrating.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Minor accidents will prevail. Arguments with family members are evident. Do not lose your patience with lovers or children. This is not the day to make promises.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You should put a little extra effort into your work. You can finish projects early, which will bring you praise from superiors. Take work home, but be sure to spend some time with your mate.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Investments will be lucrative. You can help those less fortunate if you make the effort. Self-improvement programs will show quick results.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't get pushed into doing things that you really don't have time for. You can bet that relatives will be quite willing to take advantage of you. Say no, but don't start a family feud.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Be original in your approach to life, especially when it involves loved ones. Take care of the needs of those who depend on you. Look into your vacation plans. You need some rest and relaxation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Hidden assets will pay off. You are up for wins, rewards or gifts. Plan to have friends over for an evening of socializing and entertainment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't make social commitments that you can't keep. You need to spend time with the ones you love. Overtime will bring the extra cash you need, but will also cause discord at home.

Birthday Baby: You are one happening little tyke. You are high energy and hard to keep up with. You have great ideas and will take action without much thought. You are an inventor, a doer and an entertainer.

DAILY CROSSWORD

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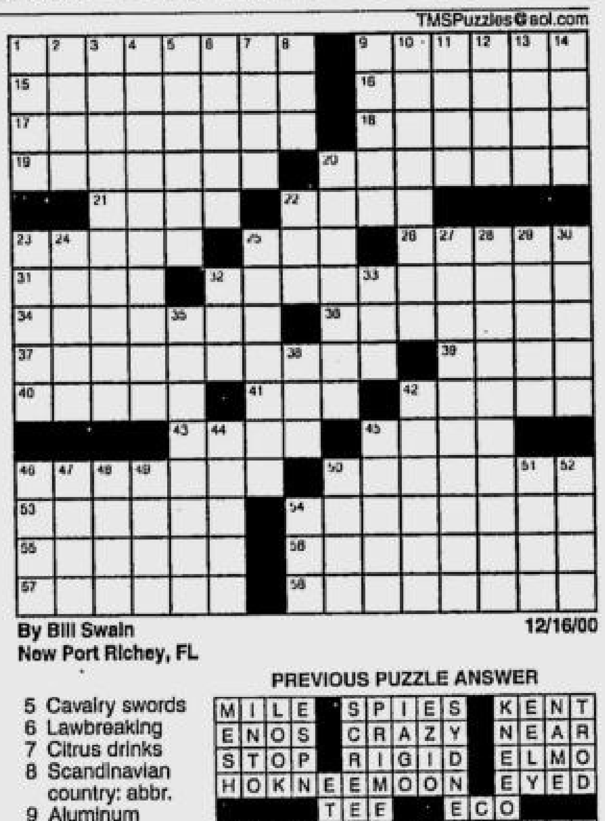
15 Fibonacci or Frescobaldi
16 Intercede
17 More covered with rounded protuberances
18 Mobile sculptor
19 Values highly
20 Queen of the busybodies
21 Concern
22 Cake in a tub?
23 RBI and ERA
25 Animal's gullet
26 "Butterfield 8" author
31 Singer Simone
32 Cornell and Hepburn
34 Addict's co-dependent
36 Stretchy
37 Frank Zappa's biggest hit
39 Nation on the Gulf of Guinea
40 Fools
41 Goddess of folly
42 Indicate with a finger
43 Pronounces
45 Water-filled hole
46 Badges
50 Like the most delicate fabric
53 Capital of the Comoros
54 One chosen
55 Watered silks
56 Removed from shipping boxes
57 In conflict
58 Having no volume

DOWN
1 Sommer of "A Shot in the Dark"
2 Hamilton bills
3 Dental procedures
4 Impossible to defeat
5 Cavalry swords
6 Lawbreaking
7 Citrus drinks
8 Scandinavian country: abbr.
9 Aluminum company
10 Jews not in Israel
11 "Persistence of Memory" painter
12 Lateral part
13 Various functions
14 Impudently bold
20 1966 Beatles hit, "__ Man"
22 Took seats
23 1983 Indy 500 winner
24 Turner and Louise
25 Spotted wildcats
27 In the past
28 Ms. Perry of Tony Awards
29 Dominance
30 Fancy cravat
32 Code base
33 Every last one
35 Waned
38 Part of TGIF
42 Worried walkers
44 Wrong
45 Bath powders
46 Austen novel
47 Debatable
48 Panache
49 Noble title
50 Singer Horne
51 Gets the point
52 Kennedy and Danson
54 Totality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By Bill Swain
New Port Richey, FL
12/16/00

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

M	I	L	E	■	S	P	I	E	S	■	K	E	N	T
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R	E	S	T	A	R	T	S	■	F	R	E	E	L	Y
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P	O	R	K	■	P	O	K	N	E	E	T	A	I	L
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L	A	T	E	■	S	T	O	K	E	■	R	E	E	F
E	L	S	E	■	T	O	W	E	R	■	P	S	S	T

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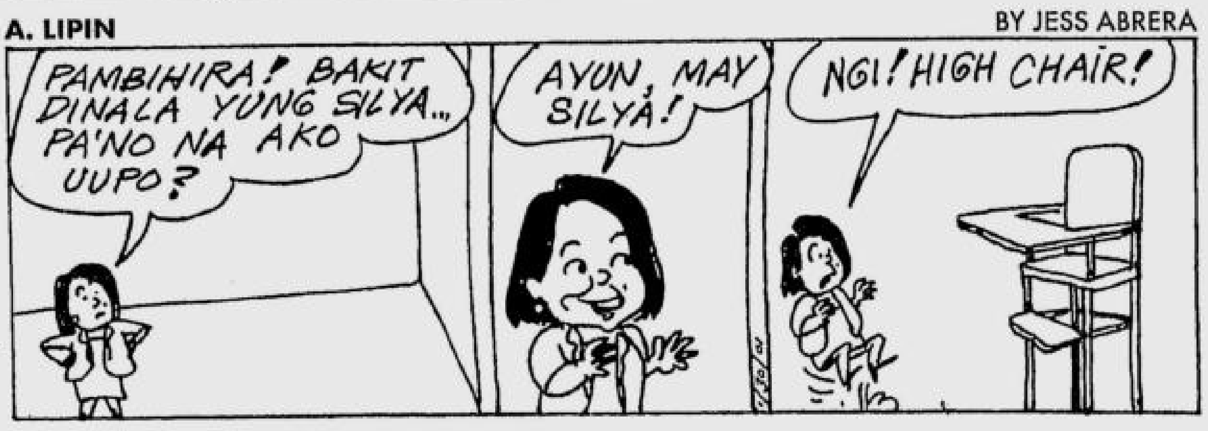
12/16/00

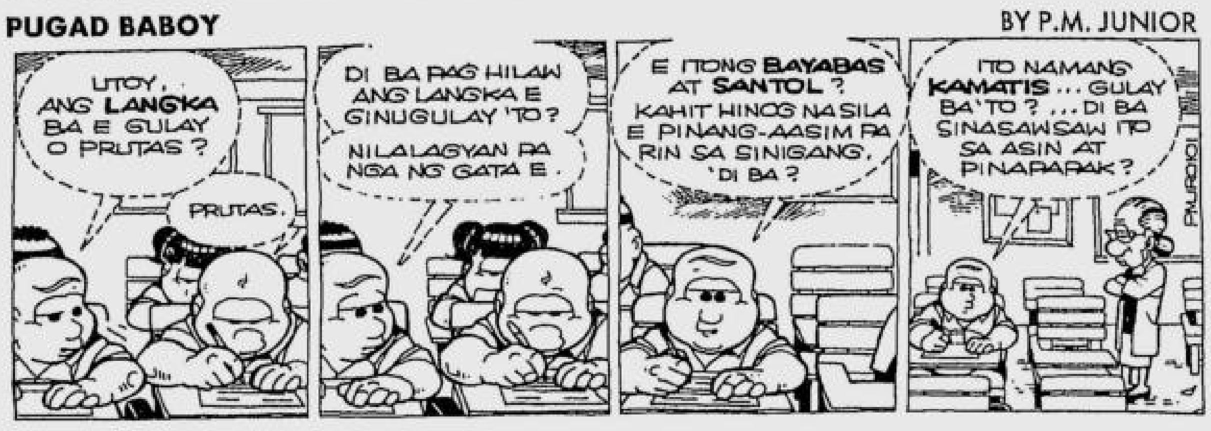
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAMBIHIRA! BAKIT DINALA YUNG SILYA... PA'NO NA AKO UUPO?
AYUN, MAY SILYA!
NGI! HIGH CHAIR!

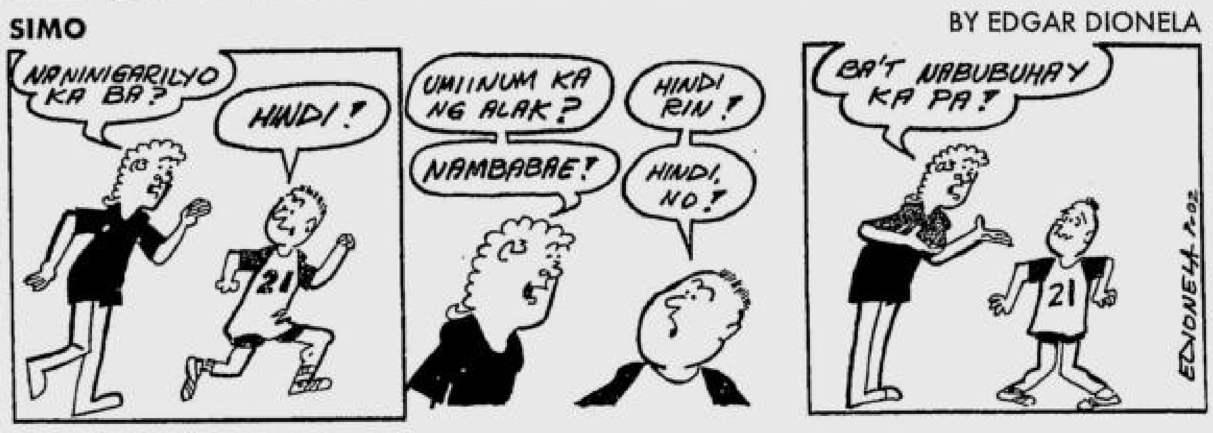
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


UTOY, ANG LANGKA BA E GULAY O PRUTAS?
PRUTAS.
DI BA PAG HILAW ANG LANGKA E GINUGULAY 'TO?
NILALAGYAN PA NGA NG GATA E.
E ITONG BAYABAS AT SANTOL? KAHIT HINOG NA SILA E PINANG-AASIM PA RIN SA SINIGANG, 'DI BA?
ITO NAMANG KAMATIS ... GULAY BA 'TO? ... DI BA SINASAWSAW ITO SA ASIN AT PINAPAPAK?
PMJR

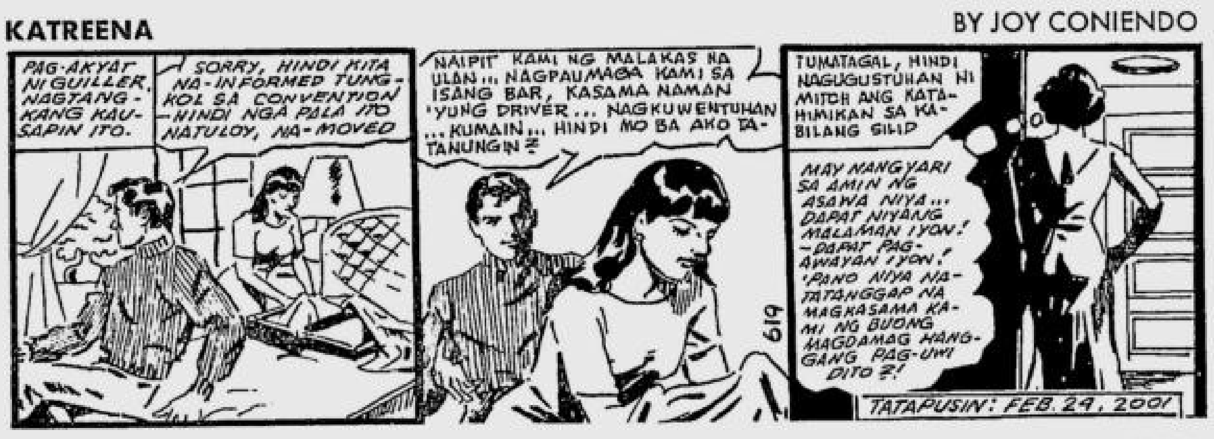
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


NANINIGARILYO KA BA?
HINDI!
UMIINUM KA NG ALAK?
HINDI RIN!
NAMBABAE!
HINDI, NO!
BA'T NABUBUHAY KA PA!
21
EDIONELA

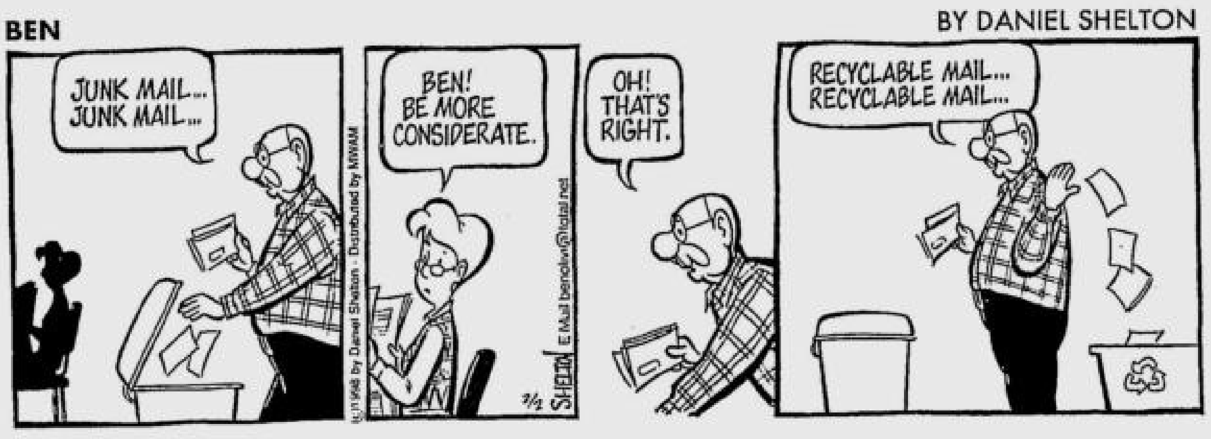
KATREENA

BY JOY CONIENDO


PAG-AKYAT NI GUILLER, NAGTANG-KANG KAUSAPIN ITO.
SORRY, HINDI KITA NA-INFORMED TUNGKOL SA CONVENTION -HINDI NGA PALA ITO NATULOY, NA-MOVED
NAIPIT KAMI NG MALAKAS NA ULAN... NAGPAUMAGA KAMI SA ISANG BAR, KASAMA NAMAN 'YUNG DRIVER... NAGKUWENTUHAN ...KUMAIN... HINDI MO BA AKO TATANUNGIN?
TUMATAGAL, HINDI NAGUGUSTUHAN NI MITCH ANG KATAHIMIKAN SA KABILANG SILID
MAY NANGYARI SA AMIN NG ASAWA NIYA... DAPAT NIYANG MALAMAN IYON! -DAPAT PAG-AWAYAN IYON! 'PANO NIYA NATATANGGAP NA MAGKASAMA KAMI NG BUONG MAGDAMAG HANGGANG PAG-UWI DITO?!
619
TATAPUSIN: FEB. 24, 2001

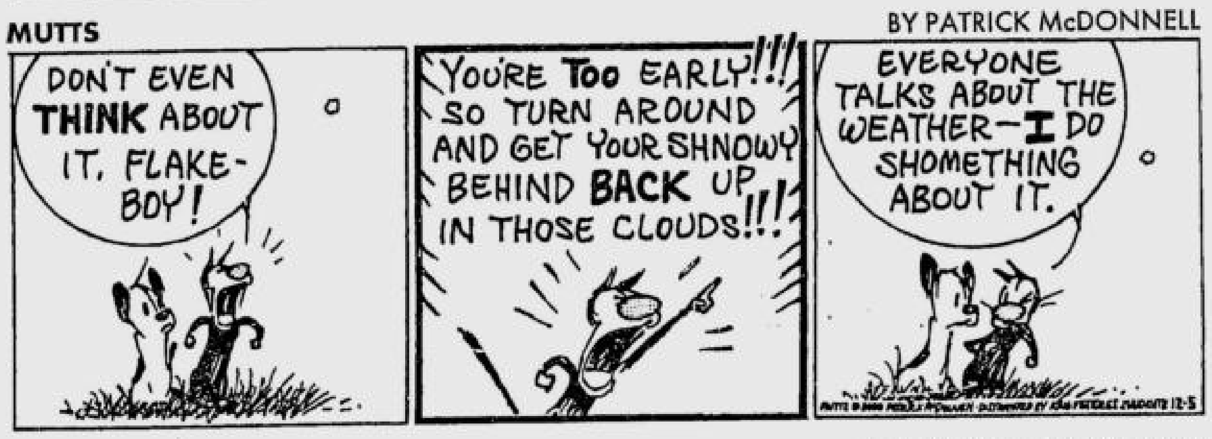
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


JUNK MAIL... JUNK MAIL...
BEN! BE MORE CONSIDERATE.
OH! THAT'S RIGHT.
RECYCLABLE MAIL... RECYCLABLE MAIL...
SHELTON
E Mail bendiv@total.net

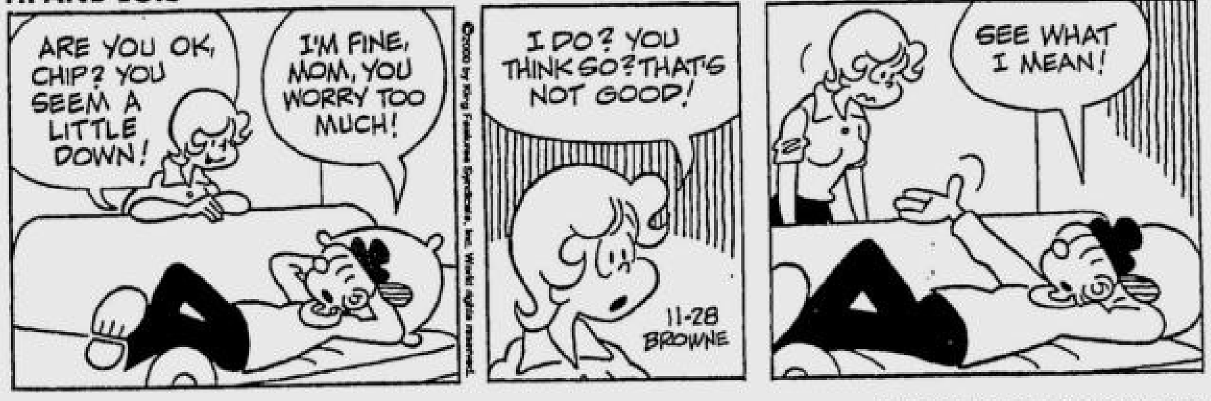
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, FLAKE-BOY!
YOU'RE TOO EARLY!!! SO TURN AROUND AND GET YOUR SHNOWY BEHIND BACK UP IN THOSE CLOUDS!!!
EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT THE WEATHER—I DO SHOMETHING ABOUT IT.
12-5

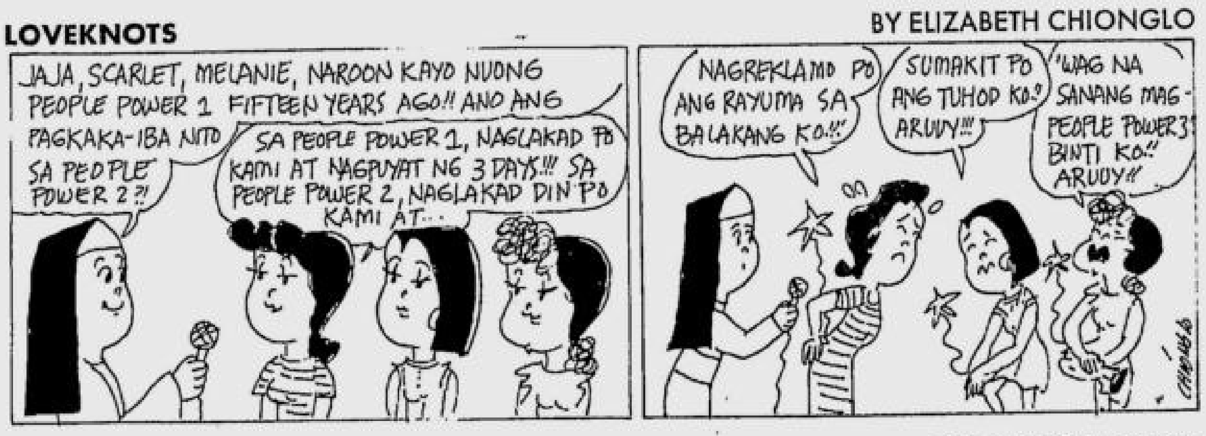
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


ARE YOU OK, CHIP? YOU SEEM A LITTLE DOWN!
I'M FINE, MOM, YOU WORRY TOO MUCH!
I DO? YOU THINK SO? THAT'S NOT GOOD!
SEE WHAT I MEAN!
11-28
BROWNE

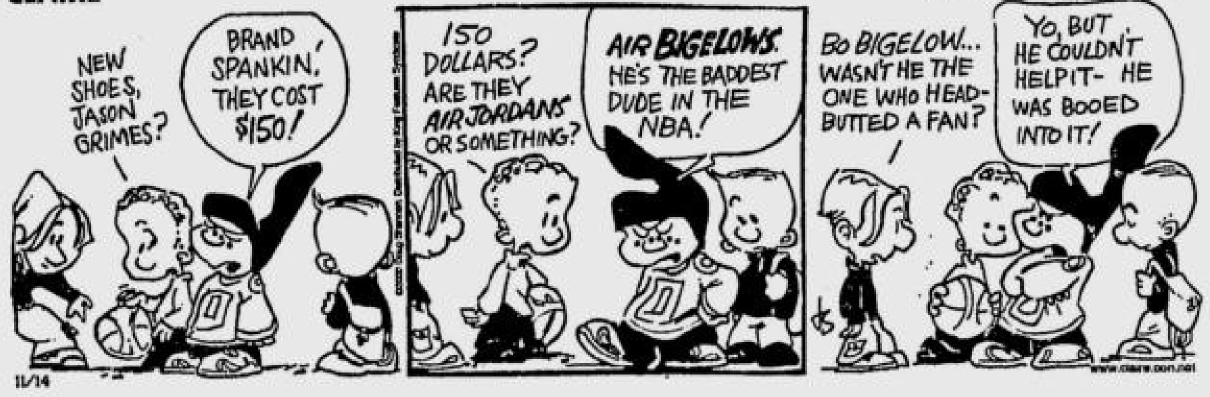
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, SCARLET, MELANIE, NAROON KAYO NUONG PEOPLE POWER 1 FIFTEEN YEARS AGO!! ANO ANG PAGKAKA-IBA NITO SA PEOPLE POWER 2?!
SA PEOPLE POWER 1, NAGLAKAD PO KAMI AT NAGPUYAT NG 3 DAYS!!! SA PEOPLE POWER 2, NAGLAKAD DIN PO KAMI AT...
NAGREKLAMO PO ANG RAYUMA SA BALAKANG KO!!!
SUMAKIT PO ANG TUHOD KO! ARUUY!!!
'WAG NA SANANG MAG-PEOPLE POWER 3! BINTI KO!! ARUUY!!

CLAIRE

BY DOUG SHANNON


NEW SHOES, JASON GRIMES?
BRAND SPANKIN'. THEY COST $150!
150 DOLLARS? ARE THEY AIR JORDANS OR SOMETHING?
AIR BIGELOWS. HE'S THE BADDEST DUDE IN THE NBA!
Bo BIGELOW... WASN'T HE THE ONE WHO HEAD-BUTTED A FAN?
YO, BUT HE COULDN'T HELP IT - HE WAS BOOED INTO IT!
11/14

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Sidelying oblique leg lift with ball

STRENGTHENS the oblique muscles that crisscross the abdominal wall (as stabilizers) as well as the hips and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and medicine ball (heavy ball) or other substitute.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your side with your legs together in alignment with your hips and shoulders. The ball can be between your thighs (easier) or your ankles (harder).

2. Rest your head on your right arm and place your left hand in front of your chest on the mat with your palm flat and your fingertips facing your head.

3. Purposely tighten and contract your abdominal muscles before you begin the exercise.

4. Exhale as you lift both legs off the floor. Inhale as you lower the legs.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advanced exercise. Do not attempt this if your abdominal muscles or lower back is weak.

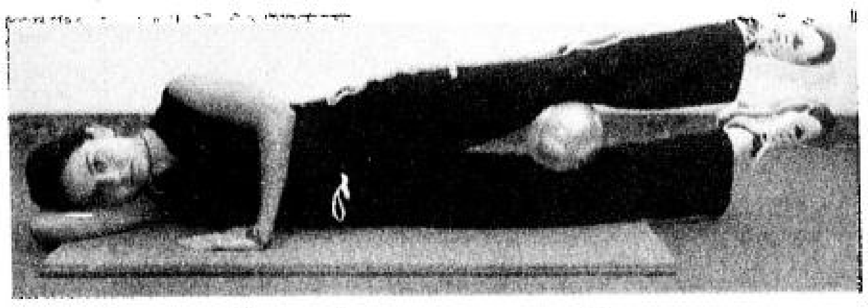
2. If you are strong but have never done this exercise, do it for a few times without the heavy ball.

3. Always contract your abdominal muscles first before you lift your legs to protect your lower back.

4. Avoid jerking. Move slowly as you lift and lower the legs.

Repetitions:

Do 10 repetitions on each side.



ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Unsolicited fitness advice for the President

(From page C1)

from developing high blood pressure. According to experts, exercise lowers diastolic blood pressure (the second figure in your blood pressure measurement) and causes the systolic pressure (the first figure) to increase less during activity.

Exercise also increases the elasticity of the arteries and strengthens the heart. This means it can pump more blood per minute, which causes the resting heart to beat more slowly. This saves on the wear and tear of the heart. That's why the medical profession has said for years that exercise plays a dramatic role in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

Exercise is a stress-buster

Let's talk about stress—you are going to have it in a major way. Exercise is one way of dealing with stress because it releases nervous tension and anxiety by providing an outlet for pent-up feelings of aggression and hostility. Exercise helps to diffuse anger and calms you down. Scientists have discovered that physically fit people have a larger reserve of hormone-like chemicals such as adrenaline, which helps the body overcome prolonged tension. So whenever you feel tense all over—exercise!

Exercise relieves depression and anxiety

They say one has to be thick-skinned to enter politics because of all the nasty things people say about you. Nothing personal—it's just the way it is. But I'm sure you are only human and these things probably do get you down sometimes. Well, exercise is one of the ways you can deal with depression and anxiety because it is a form of meditation. Alpha brain waves are found in people in a meditative and relaxed state. Researchers in Arizona State University confirmed that they have found alpha brain waves during and after a 30-minute run.

Exercise Boosts the immune system

The country needs you. You can't afford to get sick. Authorities agree that exercise can significantly reduce one's vulnerability to injury or disease so you will miss less days of work. If you do get sick, you will have shorter periods of convalescence if you are physically fit. A fit body performs more efficiently so it is naturally more resistant to infection.

Exercise makes bones stronger

Osteoporosis is a problem for women the world over, more so for women over the age of 50.

Weight-bearing exercise prevents the loss of bone mineral. Exercise promotes a better production of red and white blood cells in the bone marrow as well. Weight-bearing exercise includes weight lifting, walking, jogging, aerobics and racquet sports—any activity that applies some force to the bones.

Exercise helps control weight

Wherever you go, people are going to prepare food for you and they will be hurt if you don't eat at least some of it. That's the Filipino way. So if you don't want to finish your term 10 pounds heavier than when you started, you need to exercise because study after study suggests that a person is more successful at weight management if he or she exercises. If I may also give some advice to your better half, I suggest the First Gentleman join you during your exercise sessions.

Exercise is an investment

An opinion columnist who knows you well wrote that you are a good time manager who knows the order of priorities to be attended to. I hope that exercise will be one of your personal priorities because being physically fit is a sound investment that always has big dividends in the end.

If you value the quantity and quality of productivity in your political career, exercise is one investment you should not skimp on.

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines (AFPP) will hold a fitness seminar on Feb. 24 at Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman, QC. Instructor topics include "Speed and Agility Drills," "OverTraining" and "Principles of Endurance Training." There will be Kickboxing, Pilates, Latin and Funk Workouts. Gym manager topics include "Increasing Your Club's Leads," "Business 101" and "Hiring Evaluation Systems." Fitness enthusiast topics will be "How to Create Your Own Dance Aerobic Workout" and "Shape Up with Rubberbands." Call Lorna at 842-0567 or e-mail fitness.advantage@attglobal.net .

Misconceptions on psychic gifts and past lives

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Psychics are mediators between God and man so such gift should not be dismissed lightly

A FEMALE friend sent me a copy of the Jan. 10 issue of a weekly magazine where a brief article by a Maria Gomez (not her real name) on "What is a Mystic?" appeared. My friend felt I would find it interesting.

Well, the subject matter was interesting, all right, but not the way it was treated by the author. I just couldn't believe how a schoolteacher (which she claims to be) can be so narrow-minded and irrational! If this is the kind of teachers we have nowadays, I pity the students who shall fall under their tutelage.

Let me dissect her spurious arguments one by one.

1. She dismisses her student Nico's extraordinary clairvoyant ability to see ghosts by saying, "Who hasn't heard of someone who doesn't see spirits that others can't see?" as if this was just an ordinary ability.

On the contrary, many people in fact even pay good money to learn how to see and communicate with the spirit world. Not everybody can do this. And I doubt if the author, Maria Gomez, can do it.

I wonder how Nico might have felt after that dressing down by his teacher.

2. She asked Nico if the ability to see ghosts enhances a person's quality of life, and when he mentioned an actress who had the same gift, she curtly snapped back, "But the spirits couldn't preserve her two failed marriages."

Nico must have referred to Dina Bonnevie, whom I met personally and who has tremendous psychic gifts which she has refused to acknowledge or develop. It is true her two precious marriages failed, but why blame the spirits for it? That's not their problem. It is solely the individual's choice or decisions that determine one's life. It is not the spirits that choose for us but ourselves. We are solely responsible for our actions and decisions. Therefore, Maria's argument is non-sequitur, or does not follow from the premise. In other words, irrational or illogical.

In Biblical times and in other ancient civilizations, people who communed with the spirit world were considered to be prophets and visionaries. They were treated with respect by the entire community. They were mediators between God and man. So this gift is really very special and should not be dismissed lightly.

3. The other concept the writer Maria seems to have a problem with is reincarnation.

She says: "I read somewhere that knowing your past lives can help you understand the traumas of your present life. But many of us have enough trouble understanding who we are today. Do we still have to find out all the people we used to be? Better to focus on the life you're living now."

I agree on the last point she said above, "Better to focus on the present life." I don't believe we should go about trying to find out who we were in the past, if there is no strong ground or reason for doing so. But there are times when certain serious problems arise in our present lives which cannot be explained fully from a single-lifetime point of view. Some problems we have today are a result of past life memories. And by understanding what happened in the past, we may be able to resolve our problems in the present life.

For example, a woman has an extreme fear of heights. She looks out a window and she trembles in fear. Even going up the stairs gives her the creeps. During the hypnotic regression in my seminar, she discovered that she was living in the jungles of 17th century Switzerland. She would go places using vines like Jane of Tarzan fame. One day, the vine broke and she plunged into a deep ravine. That's how she died. By working out that past life trauma, she was able to overcome her fear of heights.

I believe that individuals who do not understand a subject matter fully should refrain from making hasty judgments or conclusions about it. I feel it is important to correct the misconceptions which that author seems to have about certain psychic gifts and the value of knowing past lives.

In fairness to her though, she admitted in her article that, "My vision may be narrow and my world small." How correct she is. As the great Greek philosopher, Socrates, said about 2,500 years ago, "To know that we do not know is the beginning of wisdom."

Address letters to this column to Rm 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

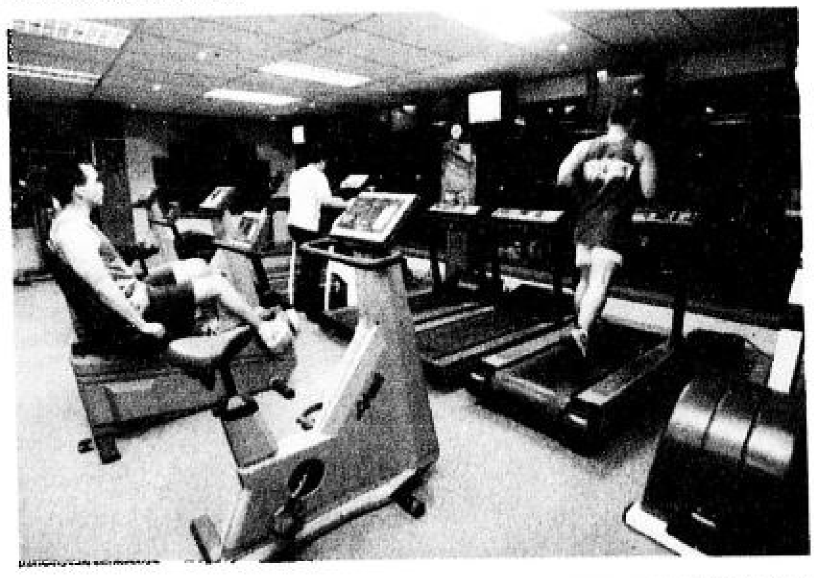
Relax, renew and rejuvenate

(From page C4)

ranging from the traditional to the most advanced. Make it more exciting by selecting treatment combinations and have them done simultaneously. Immerse yourself in deep cleansing, purifying, rehydrating, whitening, rejuvenating, back facial, eye contour treatment, oatmeal body scrub, Dead Sea salt scrub, contouring and anti-cellulite treatment.

The club also has a beauty salon which offers haircut, coloring, perming, styling, eyebrow trimming and eyelash perming, hair and makeup, manicure and pedicure, scalp treatment, foot reflex and foot scrub.

STRENGTH-TRAINING machines



THE CHILD-CARE center provides security for kids while their parents work out or enjoy a day at the spa.

Workout fuel

Pinnacle offers an alternative low-calorie and nutrient-filled snacks, refreshing juices, fruit shakes and energy drinks. It also serves healthy selections that are low in fat, cholesterol and sodium. These can be adapted for weight reduction, weight maintenance and athletic requirements.

Sample their salads (Tropical Citrus, Vegetable and Waldorf) filled with fruits and vegetables, nutritional pasta concoctions (Pesto, Classic Tomato, Carbonara and Neopolitan) and sports drinks (Hi-Carbo, Super Protein, Energizer and Power Shake).

So if you're eager for a peek at quotidian life, visit Pinnacle, which is open from 7 a.m.-12 midnight every day, where you'll find men and women who are furiously fit, families, students, GenXers, day-spa aficionados, yuppies and entertainment and fashion celebrities.

Call 920-1565, 448-6874 and 413-4791, or e-mail pinnacle@compass.com.ph.

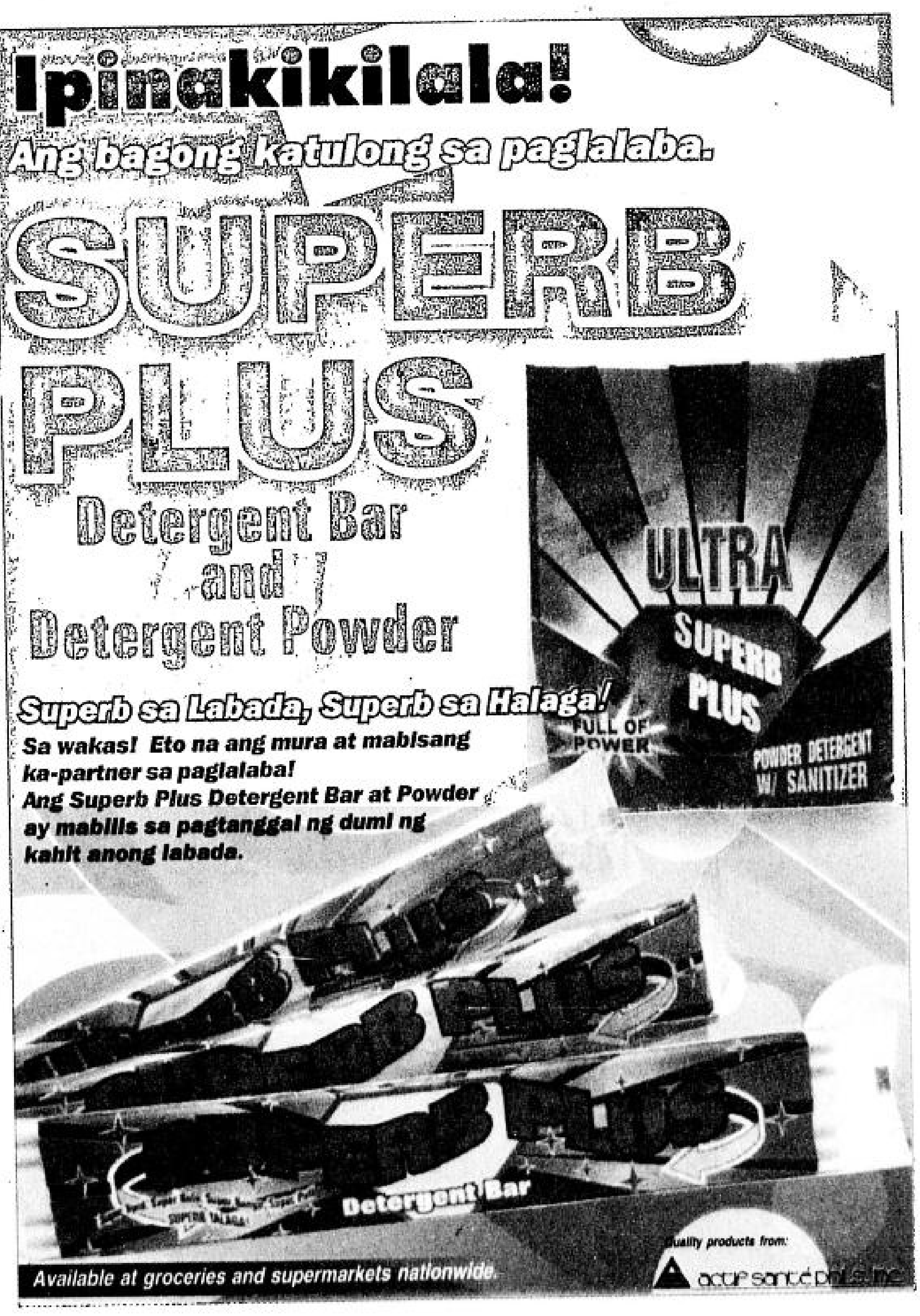
E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

Free acting and voice workshops

CENTER for Arts Foundation Inc. is now accepting applicants for its free acting and voice workshops. The workshop is open to all—from ages 8-65 years old. Courses include acting/theater arts and voice. This will be held from February to April.

The workshop aims to intensify the students' knowledge of the fundamentals of theater acting and help express his/her artistic views and feelings in a unique way through singing. The students will have their practicum at the Music Museum at the end of the workshop..

Visit the Center for Arts Office at 90-C 4th St., New Manila, QC, or call 411-0687/727-8347 and ask for Rita Vinarao.



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Ang Superb Plus Detergent Bar at Powder ay mabilis sa pagtanggal ng dumi ng kahit anong labada.
Available at groceries and supermarkets nationwide.
Quality products from:

Relax, renew and rejuvenate

By Rowena C. Burgos

BODY and facial treatments range from the time-tested to the most advanced.

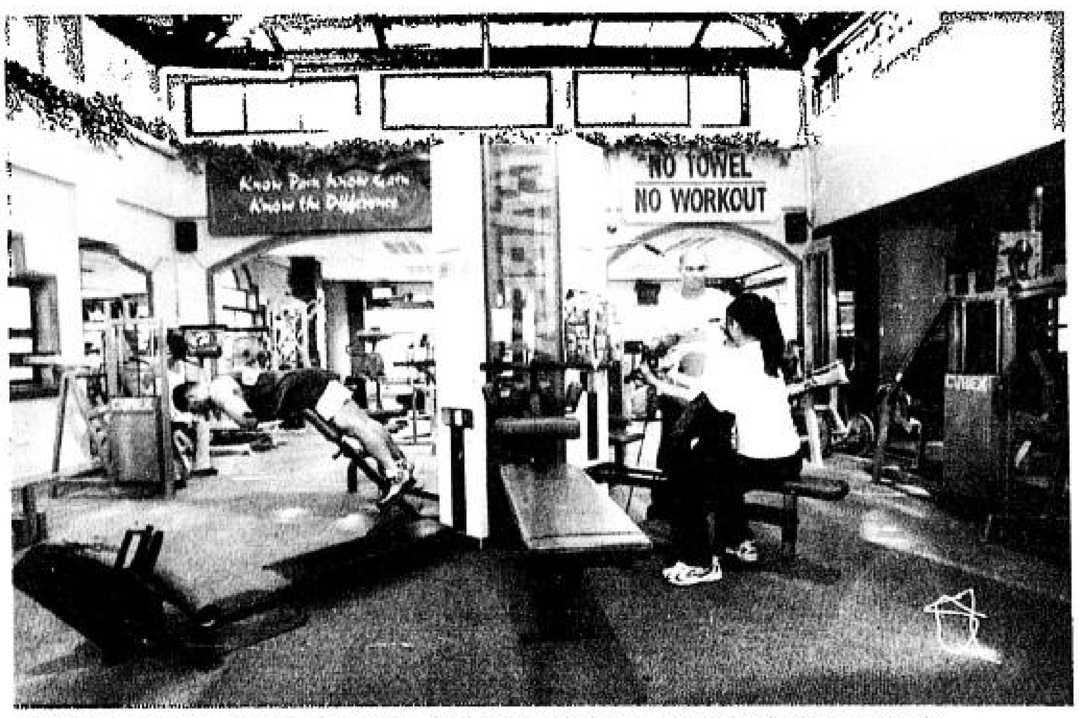
MASSAGE therapies are given by professionals who listen to the needs of guests.

THERE'S nothing like a gym workout to rejuvenate the body or a spa break to revitalize the soul. A health club is where you can relax and recharge your inner batteries or experience a complete lifestyle change, practice weight management and learn new fitness regimens that help you look and feel your best.

Fitness buffs are finding more options than ever with the 2-year-old Pinnacle Health Pointe, located at the Triple A Plaza building, 36 Scout Torillo St., QC. Originally conceptualized as a neighborhood club, Pinnacle eventually evolved into a family-oriented health and fitness club.

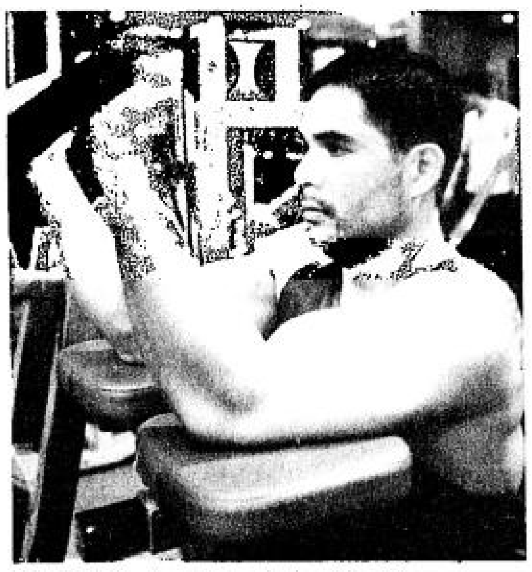
"When we thought of putting up the club two years ago, the awareness factor among average Filipinos on health and fitness was already high. And there were many fitness groups in the country. Until now, radio and TV shows feature fitness and health segments, even on MTVs. That fitness should be fun is the idea behind Pinnacle," says Nelson Sy, founder and general manager of Pinnacle.

Affordable, accessible and diversified as well, the health club indulges guests with everything from aerobics classes, healthy snacks and drinks, therapeutic massage to family KTV services and child-care center.



PINNACLE is one of the most equipped and complete fitness centers in the metropolis.

Energize your body and nourish your soul at this new family-oriented health club



SONNY Orallo, Pinnacle health club manager, shows how one can build his body into a temple of strength.

The gear

A four-story facility providing a complete line of wellness programs, Pinnacle is strictly a no-smoking zone unlike other health clubs with spa services which allow their guests to smoke. "Pinnacle's genuine concern is the health and well-being of our clients. So we try our best to educate them and find better ways to help them incorporate health and fitness in their daily lives," says Sonny Orallo, Pinnacle manager.

The club's fitness center is a fully loaded gym that's as trendy as any American health club. Guests can work out on strength-training machines such as Cybex and Bodymasters LifeFitness and Quinton treadmills, LifeCycle upright/recumbent bikes, Precor Elliptical Crosstrainer and Hampton rubberized dumbbell sets.

All fitness trainers are members of the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines (AFPP). And even if they regularly attend seminars and workshops organized by the AFPP and the Sports Medicine Association of the Philippines, they're still encouraged to take their fitness certifications. "They are graduates of physical therapy, physical education, sports science or have an equivalent work experience of two years," says Orallo, a marketing graduate who has been a fitness trainer and manager for 10 years now.

Its staff members are genuinely interested in each guest's problems and carefully supervise the use of exercise machines and fitness classes like aerobics, aerokickboxing, kid's fitness, adventure fitness for outdoor activities, ballet for children, ballroom dancing, martial arts (aikido, karate and kickboxing). Other services offered are bodybuilding/powerlifting, cardiovascular conditioning, fitness assessment to record blood pressure, body fat composition, weight and body measurements, nutritional counseling, physical therapy and rehab.

And while working out, parents can get a glimpse of their children at the child-care center, a playroom where kids can avail of tutorial services and lessons in music and arts, through the TV monitors inside the gym.

Body treatments

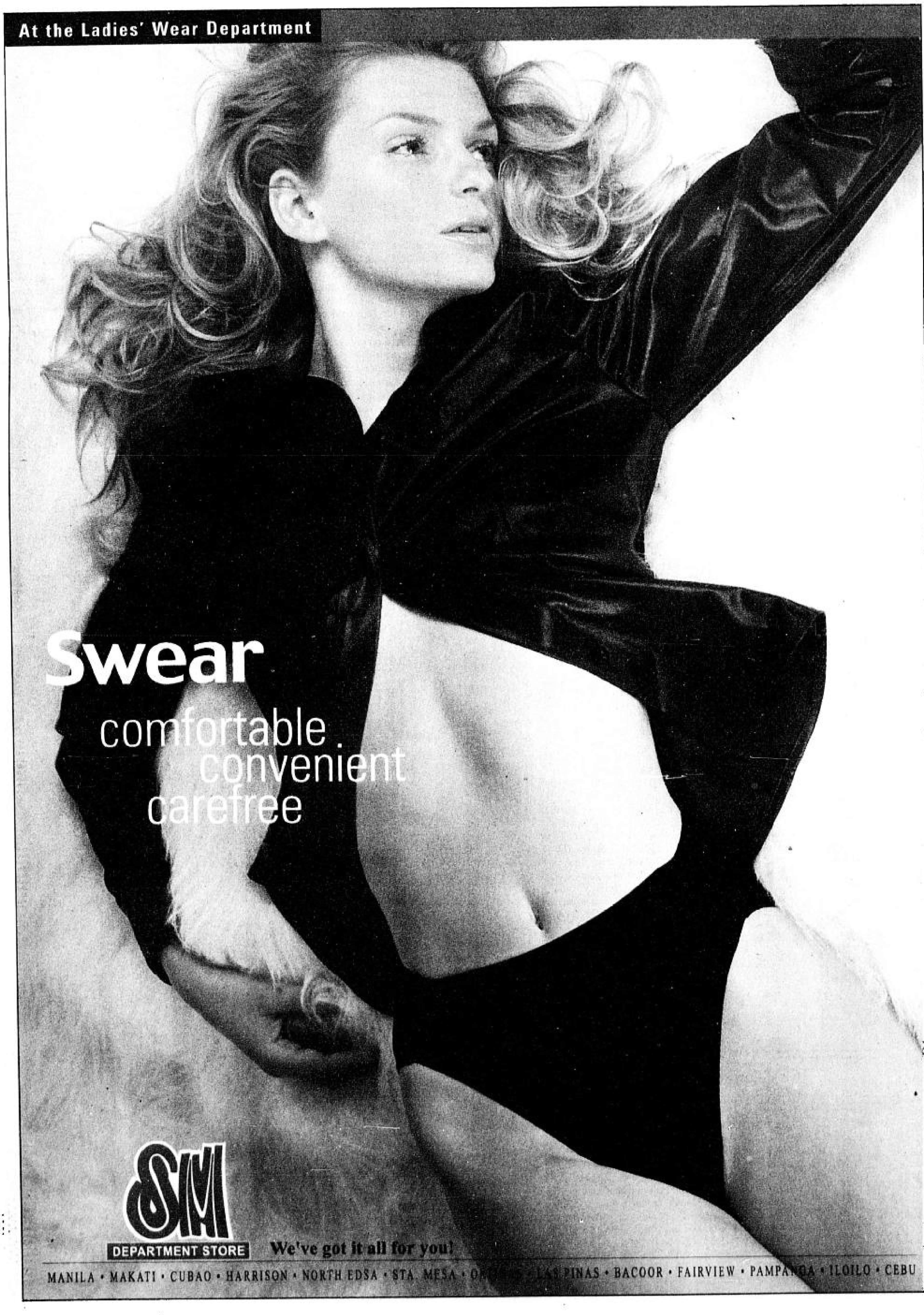
Pamper yourself with therapeutic and recreational massages at the club's de luxe, executive and superior rooms. Experience how delightful total privacy and a clean and warm environment can be with its hydrotherapy tub.

A typical American spa once featured a massage and possibly a soothing whirlpool bath. Then various other massage therapies were gradually introduced, including Oriental shiatsu and reflexology, European-style body wraps using seaweed, herbs and other organic materials and aromatherapy to stimulate the olfactory passages and ease tension. All these are offered at Pinnacle plus treatments from India and the Orient aimed at realigning the body's energies and to enhance metabolism and maximize vigor.

A rejuvenated body should be complemented with a comprehensive body and facial treatments

RELAX/ p.C3

NELSON Sy, founder and general manager of Pinnacle, with model Tweetie de Leon



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carefree
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DEPARTMENT STORE
We've got it all for you!
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